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Communism and Fascism

Part II

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FASCISM originates as a reaction against Communism. After the War a wave of Communism and Syndicalism swept over Italy. It was accompanied by violence and the middle class became alarmed. They had watched the progress of Communism in Russia with some anxiety and feared that events in Italy might take the same course. Accordingly they organized for defense, and joined hands with the Fascist Party which Mussolini had organized from the members of the Interventionist Party who had themselves been in action. The alliance between Mussolini and the middle class was a marriage of convenience. They wanted protection and he wanted allies to enable him to take control of the government and drive some sense into the heads of the Communists and their allies.

In 1920 the workers had seized the factories and had voluntarily handed them back to their owners because they found they could do nothing with them. Mussolini pointed the moral. Though he had been a Socialist and a leader of Syndicalism and though he

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continued to accept the trades unions as a basis for industrial reorganization, he saw the folly of a policy of class warfare which could only end in depriving industry of its technicians and organizers. The middle class might be guilty of exploitation but they performed a necessary function. He therefore sought to convince the working class that it was no easy thing to direct industry or commercial enterprises successfully, and that there was a legitimate place for the middle class.

In the campaign which followed he talked about many other things in addition. He talked about a new patriotism, the former greatness of Rome – Italy must have its place in the sun. He attacked not only the Communists but the Government for their supineness in remaining passive during the piecemeal revolution. He attacked liberalism and democracy because he blamed their principles for the weakness of the Government during the crises; and he attacked war profiteers and demanded the confiscation of war profits. He talked about a capital levy, a heavy inheritance tax, and the danger of those who were obstructing reform. Above all, he urged the need of substituting class cooperation for class warfare and of a strong control while he offered determined leadership. "It is not," he was accustomed to say "a program of salvation that Italy needs but a man and a Will." That was in 1920. Within a twelvemonth he had changed his mind, and we find him pressing for a program as absolutely essential for holding the party together. In December, 1921, the program of the National Fascist Party appeared. Thus Fascism was not, like Communism, born of a mid-Victorian theory, but was forged in action, and for that reason it is empirical and possesses a resilience and adaptability Communism does not possess.

The decisive thing in the fortunes of Fascism was the return from Fiume of D'Annunzio with his troops, who threw in their lot with the Fascists. It was their support that turned the scales. The march to Rome in October, 1922, which followed was a dramatic event which set the seal of official approval on a *fait accompli.* It was not a military but a psychological victory. Mussolini then became Prime Minister and shortly afterwards Dictator.

For three years Mussolini used all his powers as a dictator to unify the country by getting rid of opposition. Gradually he forced all opposing leaders to come into line with him or resign. In the country he was assisted in this task of unification by the Blackshirts, whom he had organized from unemployed war veterans and youths, who intimidated and terrified all who refused to support the new government. In 1925 this policy of coercion culminated in the killing of the Socialist deputy Matteotti, an event which marks a turning point in the history of Fascism. Public indignation was so intense that for a moment the fate of Fascism hung in the balance. But Mussolini rose to the occasion. He threw overboard the extremists of his own party and made an alliance with the moderate Socialists; and Fascism from being a movement of reaction was transformed into a movement of social reconstruction with the establishment of the Corporate State as its first objective.

The Corporate State found a place in the program of the Fascist Party from the start, though it was not until 1926 that efforts were made to establish it. Its presence there was no doubt partly owing to the fact that D'Annunzio based the constitution of Fiume upon the Corporate State. In a deeper sense it is to be traced to the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, which was the basis of the Popular (Catholic) Party, and to the strong Syndicalist movement derived from the same social conceptions. Its adaptation to the circumstances of today is doubtless due to Mussolini's practical common sense responding to these vigorous traditional currents. Corporate comes from the Italian word *corporazione*, which means guild. The Corporate State is only another name for the Regulative Guild State.

In Italy today industry is controlled by eighteen national Syndicates or Guilds, each of which is under the direction of a council consisting of an equal number of representatives of employers and workers with a government official – the Podesta – who acts as arbitrator in case of dispute. Large-scale enterprise is subject to far-reaching control. Dividends are limited to six percent; wages and prices are fixed; strikes are forbidden. The Chamber of Deputies has no longer a territorial basis, but consists of representatives of the Guilds.

It is impossible to exaggerate the significance of the establishment of the Corporate State as a really practical achievement in the domain of economics. It throws overboard what is false and suicidal in Communist aims and realizes what is true; while, moreover, it demonstrates that mediaeval ideas still have practical validity, since when revived they work creatively, whereas Modernist ones, of which Communism is the supreme example, always work destructively. Nevertheless, it is not a solution acceptable to Socialists, who are accustomed to represent Fascism as the last stand of capitalism. They picture Communism to themselves as an entirely new order in which the workers own and operate the means of production for the benefit of a classless society and Fascism as a godless compromise in which capitalists make certain concessions in order to maintain the profit and class system at the expenses of the working class.

Neither picture is true to fact. The Russian experiment, as we saw, has failed, and its collapse is only being averted by the abandonment one by one of the things the Bolsheviks set out to establish. The Soviet Republic today is by no means a classless society and every day it becomes less so. The principle of equality is gone forever. Nor do the workers own the means of production except in a very theoretical sense. On the contrary, it is the State that owns them, and the State is not the community but a thing outside of it, though in Socialist writings they are treated as identical. On the other hand Fascism, with all its defects, cannot be regarded as the last stand of capitalism, but the first really practical attempt to get it under control. In theory private capitalists are, under Fascism, trustees for the State. Capitalists do not accept the restrictions placed upon themselves because they love to be controlled, but because they are forced to.

The issue will be found to turn on how we define capitalism. If it be defined as the private management and private ownership of industry, then the Corporate State is capitalist. But then, by such definition every peasant who has a small holding and every craftsman who has a small workshop is a capitalist, which is absurd. If, however, by capitalism we mean the control of industry, not by craftsmen but by financiers, and the legalization of a system in which the means of production are owned by a small class which is at liberty to exploit the workers and the community, then the Corporate State is not capitalist; for in all such matters the capitalist must toe the line. He must conform to the conditions demanded by his Syndicate or Guild, and accept the ruling of the Podesta, who is there to arbitrate and insure fair play. Evidence suggests that if the Podestas are not impartial they are at any rate not biassed in favor of capitalists; for though Mussolini secured the support of the Italian industrialists by forbidding strikes and lockouts and insisting upon arbitration, this ruling has not worked out at all as they expected, since in almost every case when attempts have been made to lower wages the Podesta has decided in favor of the workers. The industrialists have often regretted their not altogether disinterested generosity that placed Mussolini in power.

To the wisdom of this policy, which steers a safe middle course between impossible and undesirable extremes, Socialists are blind. Their fixed idea is that all the social and economic evils of the present day are to be traced to the institution of private property; and they still cling to this belief in spite of the fact that the Russian experiment proved the remedy to be worse than the disease, and private property is being re-introduced. But Socialists close their eyes to this colossal failure. They have become so accustomed to living in a world of illusions, to spending their time in a war against reality, that they do not want to be disturbed in their day-dreams. And remember, every Socialist is a Communist at heart; any differences between Socialists and Communists do not relate to ends but to means. The Socialist rejects class warfare as a means of realizing the new order, while the Communist pursues it; though so far from class warfare being an integral part of true Communism it is, as we saw, incompatible with it. The notion that class warfare could be used to establish Communist society is one of the craziest, maddest ideas that ever entered the mind of man.

Burke said it was the test of good institutions that they "fitted human nature as modified by habits". Judged by this standard the Corporate State is justified. It does fit human nature as modified by habits — Communism on the other hand most emphatically does not. All the tyranny and violence to which it has given rise is proof of this, because they are so many attempts to make the individual fit in a mold which does not accord with human nature. Communism in the political sense is an unrealizable ideal, because it demands that the individual live on a higher moral plane than the average man is capable of doing; that in other words he be "virtuous beyond his capacity".

To be sure there have been, throughout history, many examples of successful Communism; but they have always been associated with religious communities, have rested upon a discipline, and have been small communities withdrawn from normal social life. Most of these communities have been monastic orders where celibacy was enjoined upon the members, for Communism is not to be easily reconciled with family life. Where it has been reconciled, as in the case of the

Anabaptists, or, to take a more modern example, the Shakers in the United States, the communities have been sustained by apocalyptic beliefs which lifted their members so much above their ordinary selves that they found it easy to subordinate their interests to those of the community. But in the ordinary workaday world where men are governed by their appetites and passions, where good, bad, and indifferent are intermingled, where, in a word, the ordinary animal man functions, it is different.

The Bolsheviks found that out. They found that the Communist maxim "from each according to his capacity to each according to his needs" is a counsel of perfection and unrealizable in practice. The attempt to act on this principle in the early days of the Revolution led to a widespread demoralization that threatened to bring industry to a standstill. The equalitarian principle did not work, because by giving no adequate encouragement to personal gain and initiative it destroyed interest in work and undermined sense of responsibility. It could not provide the stimulus necessary for the worker to make himself efficient, while it led to carelessness in regard to equipment. In consequence the Bolsheviks were driven by the force of circumstances to make concessions to human nature as they found it, leading them, as we saw, to institute different rates of pay for skilled and unskilled, light and heavy work, for different degrees of responsibility, and to resort to piecework, where it could be applied, as a means of speeding up industry.

Thus they found that the criticism of the man-in-the-street — that Communism left human nature out of account — which they had dismissed with contempt, was after all true. In literature, science, and art, interest in work may be sufficient to stir men to high attainments in spite of inadequate material reward, because the work itself is interesting. But in the world of material development it is different. The work itself is not as a rule interesting, and there is no kudos. In consequence, experience proves that unless the worker can be assured of material reward the incentive to activity and achievement will be lacking.

Fascists did not make this mistake. If they hitched their wagon to a star they made sure that its wheels remained on the ground. They did not idealize human nature, but took it as they found it, on the assumption that while it is the function of religion to change human nature, politics must be content to reckon with men as they are, and not as they might be. In consequence Fascism accepts the nature of the average man as the foundation on which to build. The average man is not a saint, but neither is he a devil. He pursues self-interest up to a certain point, but he is content when he has made a sufficiency, when he can provide for himself and his family in reasonable comfort; and all he asks of politics is that they guarantee him peace and security; peace as means to pursue his happiness; and security for his livelihood, his family, the fruits of his labor, and his property. He can be moved by altruistic as well as by self-interested motives; but he is no more capable of living in a society that demands he be completely altruistic, than he is capable of sacrificing himself entirely to the pursuit of self-interests. His ideal is to live and enjoy, he is prepared to take risks, for he conceives life as duty, struggle, and achievement, but he suspects and avoids extremes.

Taking their stand upon the nature of the average man, Fascists recognize that to eliminate self-interest entirely is not expedient, because it leads, as we saw, to apathy, indifference, and demoralization. But to give it free play, to remove all restraints, is equally dangerous; because to do this is to hand over the direction of society to its most avaricious members, to those who have no respect for human individuality, who are brutal and callous in their treatment of others, and who do not hesitate to rob, sweat, or enslave their fellows to gratify their lust for power and riches. In these circumstances the only reasonable thing to do is to take a middle course; to accept self-interest and to put a fence round it, to keep it within bounds, thus preventing the individual in the pursuit of his own interests from trespassing on the rights of others. This was the principle underlying the Guilds in the Middle Ages, and it is the principle underlying the Fascist Corporate State. It is the principle to which the world must return, because it is the only one capable of reconciling the conflicting claims of individual and collective life. A society which conformed to this principle would be individualist in so far as it recognized the principle of private property and insisted upon its wide distribution, and socialist in so far as it insisted on the control of private property and upon regulation of currency and industry in the common interest.

The corollary of all this is a policy of national economic self-sufficiency, which is in line with what Progressives were once pleased to call the "trend of economic evolution", but which in these days they fight against, now that the tide has turned and it can no longer be used to support their Free Trade assumptions. Yet rightly interpreted, the steady decline of foreign trade, the progress of every nation towards self-sufficiency, is one of the most hopeful factors in the world situation, not only because nations which pursue policies of self-sufficiency will have less reason to quarrel with one another than those which follow international policies, but because a nation can only be really economically stable when its manufactures rest on a foundation of agriculture and, as far as possible, home-produced raw materials, and its commerce on a foundation of native manufactures.

Foreign trade should be limited to the exchange of those things nations cannot produce for themselves. It is pure folly to buy from other nations things that can be produced at home, merely because they can be bought more cheaply, when such cheapness involves the sacrifice of home agriculture and industries; since in the economic sense men must be producers before they can be consumers, to sacrifice their interest as producers is to uproot them. This gives rise to endless uncertainty and social demoralization, for experience proves it is generally impossible for the individual so deprived of his means of livelihood to get on his feet again; while it is expensive for the nation, since a large proportion of such people eventually come to be supported by public money. Free trade is a penny-wise and pound-foolish policy; it is the principle of social destruction, and belief in it only survives because of the incapacity of most people to contemplate more than one aspect of the social process at a time.

Fascists put economics in their proper place. They do not, like Free Traders, believe the object of man's existence is to produce cotton and buttons as cheaply as possible, and as a consequence they refuse to sacrifice the spiritual and material well-being of the race to considerations of cheapness. They regard a prosperous peasantry as the necessary foundation of a true social order, as a reservoir from which the towns replenish their stock; and persuaded that man does not live by bread alone, they consider it their duty to protect simple people from the corroding effects of materialism.

Closely allied with the idea of national self-sufficiency is the belief of Fascists in the importance of nationality. Owing to the association of nationality with militarism it has, in these days, become suspect. This is unfortunate because nationality is a natural fact, and their is no more necessary connection between it and a bellicose spirit than there is between the institution of the family and family feuds. We ought not to forget that before the Franco-Prussian War the idea of nationality had no such unfortunate associations, but was associated in the minds of Liberals with the cause of liberty. Nationality has absolute value because differences of language, culture, and tradition call for different expression. It represents a unity or natural grouping indispensable to their proper functioning. When therefore Mussolini says "The road to internationalism is through nationalism", I am at one with him, though I cannot reconcile this opinion with his imperialist ambitions; for nationalism and imperialism are in principle opposed. A respect for the principle of nationality should operate for peace. People get on best with each other who have sufficient respect for each other's personality to observe right distances and avoid undue familiarity. So it is with nations. They fight shy of any universal embrace, especially those whose position is weak and uncertain. It is political and economic internationalism, so dear to Liberals, that has given nationalism its aggressive spirit.

In his recent book *The Will to Freedom*, Mr. Ross Hoffman claims that the essence of Fascism is to be found in a return to tradition, as distinguished from Bolshevism which is inspired by a hatred of things that belong to the past. With that opinion I am in entire accord. Fascism is the social subconscious reasserting itself against that ugly and menacing thing, Bolshevism, and that poisonous and corroding thing from which Bolshevism springs, Modernism. This accounts for the crudeness of its methods, for methods are apt to be crude when self-preservation is the issue. But while all traditional things are imbued with a strong sense of reality, tradition is not to be equated with the good, for there are bad as well as good things in tradition. If Fascism could be equated with the Corporate State we might be able to give it an unqualified approval. But there is another side to Fascism, and one which I am persuaded will not, in the long run, fit human nature even when modified by habits. I refer to the Totalitarian State with its claim to exercise jurisdiction over every department of social life and to man's absolute and unconditional allegiance, and the imperialist aspect of Fascism.

The two sides cannot be reconciled; they are mutually exclusive. The Totalitarian State implies centralization and as such is opposed in principle to the Corporate State which rests on the principle of federalism. In consequence one can only grow at the expense of the other. Perhaps the appearance of both in Fascism foreshadows that tragic duality towards which Berdyaev predicts the modern world is moving, when the forces of good and evil which today are so confused will become sharply divided and do battle with each other. If so, Fascism becomes extremely significant. It enhances its importance while at the same time denying its absolute value, for it becomes a thing of transition, a phase, a temporary alliance between opposed forces against a common enemy.

Though I put the Totalitarian State in the category of positive evil, for such a State cannot have adequate respect for liberty of conscience or the claims of human personality, I do not do the same thing with Dictatorships. They are not necessarily evil things but regrettable necessities, inevitable at certain times, when other forms of government break down and there is no other way of governing. Writers of the Liberal school think that as Communism, Fascism, and Nazism are each controlled by dictators there is little to choose between them, that in their essential features they are identical; the dictatorship in each case being the dictatorship of a man and a party, alike in claiming jurisdiction over the whole of life. But that is where their similarity ends, for while their methods are similar their aims are fundamentally different, and it is by the direction in which they move that they should be judged. The ideal of Communism is to uproot tradition, including the institution of private property, and to refashion people in the image of the machine. Fascism, as we saw, exists to defend tradition and human values while it seeks a wider distribution of property; it is Distributist rather than Collectivist.

Meanwhile, confronted by a vigorous Communist movement, Fascism had no option but to resort to dictatorship as the only way of keeping Communists in subjection. Indeed the choice Italy had to make was not between dictatorship and no dictatorship, but between a Communist dictatorship and a Fascist dictatorship, and it wisely chose the latter. In such circumstances to condemn all dictatorships, to lump them all together irrespective of their aims, is to surrender to Communism, for it is to make resistance impossible. That Liberals should be unable to make any such distinction shows the unreality of the Liberal point of view.

The other Liberal idea that Fascism is merely a half-way house on the road to Communism is ridiculous, and could only arise in the minds of people utterly unable to understand what Fascism is. The truth is much more likely to be the reverse, because each new development in Russia is in the direction of a return to tradition and hence to Fascism. Liberals, of all people, have the least right to object to dictatorships, because their arrival is one of the fruits of Liberalism. They are the logical consequence of a century of *laissez-faire* ideas of government, of allowing everybody to do what he liked until such an infinity of Gordian knots had accumulated that a dictator was needed to cut them, for there was no such thing as untying them. It is significant that both Italy and Germany had Proportional Representation before they had dictatorships. Proportional Representation is justified according to the democratic faith, but it paralyzes government by giving rise to so many small parties, and thus prepares the way for dictatorship.

To return to the Totalitarian State. Though in theory it claims jurisdiction over every department of social life, in practice Mussolini has found it expedient to compromise over religion. Fascism is not, like Communism, atheistic and irreligious. On the contrary, says Mussolini, "Fascism respects the God of the ascetics, the saints, and heroes, and equally, God as He is perceived and worshipped by simple people". It has restored to the schools both the crucifix and the practice of prayer, while the religious teaching given in schools under State control is given on orthodox Catholic lines. Moreover it is considered the duty of all good Fascists to treat the Church with outward respect, even those who are unbelievers; while any who publicly revile Catholicism are liable to penal servitude. Nevertheless there have been clashes between the Fascists and the Church; the age-old problem of Church and State, always to the fore in times of turmoil and transition, was not settled by a stroke of the pen at the signing of the Lateran Treaty of 1929. The all-embracing aspect of Fascism inevitably collides with the determination of the Church to preserve her independence. The control of education has been the chief bone of contention, and no wonder, since the tone of Fascist teaching has sometimes been objectionable, to say the least. But a practical working basis of agreement has apparently been attained for the time being, whether or not it is permanent.

The claim of Fascists that belief in the Totalitarian State is justified because of the continual and inevitably invoked intervention of the State in the sphere of economics is unfounded, for there is a limit to what it can accomplish successfully in the sphere of economics. That limit is set by the fact that economic regeneration depends finally on moral and aesthetic regeneration, the promotion of which is entirely beyond the competence of the State; and this because for all such activities independence is the breath of life. Destroy their autonomy and they wither. Fascists do not know for what they are asking.

The assumption of all power by the State could only be justified if the State were the final and absolute value for which all other activities exist. But this is to reverse the natural order of things. The State exists or should exist to protect the community, not to absorb it. In any tolerable social order there would be a plurality of powers, since only when such a condition of things exists can the excesses of one power be corrected by another and liberty guaranteed. The claim of Mussolini, that it is only when the State is omnipotent that national life is in the ascendant, is not supported by history. On the contrary, the growth of omnipotent States is always the prelude to national decline, because the life and vigor of peoples depend among other things on a widely distributed initiative which concentration of power tends to destroy. Generally speaking, the State is on safe ground when it is content to cooperate, and when it confines its activities to doing things which much need doing and would otherwise be left undone. At the best the State is a clumsy instrument, and its effectiveness obeys the law of diminishing returns, because the State cannot act except by means of bureaucracy; and the end of all bureaucracies is to get strangled by ever-accumulating red tape. For such reasons a prolonged attempt to realize the Totalitarian State must end in paralysis. It happened to its partial prototype, the Roman State, which ended in destroying its own foundations. It is strange that Mussolini, who makes his appeal to the former greatness of Rome, should be blind to one of the most obvious lessons which its decline has to teach.

Though Fascism grappled successfully with the political problem that confronted Italy after the War, it has been baffled as other nations have by the economic one. Italy prospered so long as there was a sufficiency of public works to be done, and international trade kept active. But Italy, like other nations, could not stand up against the "economic blizzard" which began in 1929 and which in its main essentials still remains. The world slump exposed the economic weakness of Fascism, for when all is said, unemployment is the central problem of our age, and unless Fascism can find a solution for it, it is no remedy and will either rot away as the Roman Empire rotted or be destroyed by war, which will merely accelerate the decay and plunge society into barbarism.

Here we get back to the problem of machinery, which is the key problem of modern civilization, for unemployment is largely a question of machinery. For more than a century society has refused to face it, hoping against hope that the evils to which it gave rise were nothing more than the maladjustments incidental to an age in transition and that as the process reached completion a new equilibrium would be established at a higher level. It was a comforting theory but it is no longer even plausible, for evidence accumulates daily that mechanization does not lead to any rational social order but to an enormous increase in power of the irrational forces in society, which must grow until they overwhelm society unless the use of machinery is drastically curtailed. Fascists have some inkling of the reality of this problem, for they have passed a law forbidding the introduction of new labor-saving machinery without the permission of the government. As a gesture it is not without significance, but it only touches the fringe of the problem, and unless very drastic action is taken neither Fascism nor civilization will survive.

Not daring to interfere drastically with machinery, Mussolini has been driven by the force of circumstances to seek a solution on the old capitalist lines of colonial expansion. Hence the war with Abyssinia, the conquest of which he said in a recent interview would provide work for Italians for fifty years in addition to furnishing her industries with raw material, whilst providing a market for her manufactured goods. But it is no solution. It merely puts off the evil day.

Since Italy made war on Abyssinia there can no longer be any doubt as to the intentions of Fascism. Before that happened the Fascist worship of the State could be interpreted as nothing more than a reaction against Liberalism and *laissez-faire*, and the weakness of Italian government for which it was responsible; and the bellicose utterances of Mussolini as intended for home consumption or as mere bravado. But we realize now that Mussolini has all along meant what he said, and the full force of his dictum that "Fascism believes neither in the possibility nor in the utility of perpetual peace" comes home to us. There appear to be quite a number of people in every country who are always conspiring to make war, and as there is no reason to suppose the type will disappear, it looks as if the prospects of perpetual peace were nil. As to the utility of perpetual peace this is a difficult question, for though I should like to believe that everything was to be said against War and nothing for it, I find it difficult to reconcile this with the facts of history. Could anything but the Great War have shaken the complacency of the plutocracy and the governing class? Moreover, warfare on a vast scale appears to be a necessary accompaniment of the destruction of effete civilizations and the birth of new ones. Still, I am a man of peace and I never waver in my desire unless I happen to go to a pacifist meeting, when I feel I want to shoot.

Though there are many ideas in Fascism which are purely Italian and others which are founded on error, it nevertheless embodies principles which are universally true. We cannot therefore be surprised that Fascism is spreading rapidly in most European countries. Immediately this is due to the spread and fear of Communism, but the chief factor that all over the world has led Fascism to boom is the attraction it has for middle-class youth, whose mind has not been corrupted by a modernist education, who are profoundly dissatisfied with the world as they find it, and take up with Fascism which, like Communism, is capable of appealing to social idealism, but does not seek to reduce the middle class to the position of a mere appendage of the proletariat. It does not make the gratuitous assumption that the working class is the only class capable of social initiative; still less that salvation is only to be found in the triumph of the proletariat; and thus it promises to emancipate the middle class from the thralldom of labor politics.

As a middle-class person let me confess that the break Fascism makes with labor politics is one of its attractions for me. I welcome its denial of the unfounded assumption that social reconstruction must come from the working class, especially as the working class would be politically helpless apart from middle-class support and cooperation. Moreover the assumption puts the intelligentsia into a false, not to say a ridiculous, position. It has led them to say to the working class in so many words, "We can do nothing because we have the misfortune to belong to the middle class. But with you it is different. You are members of the working class, and because of that accident of fortune the future is in your hands. (We are assured of this because Marx said so, and what he didn't know about social evolution isn't worth knowing.) It is up to you, therefore, to seize power from the capitalist. But when you have seized it you must not forget to hand it on to us, otherwise you will be lost; for your heads are empty and ours are full of ideas", and so on and so on. Could any attitude be more absurd and undignified? Can we be surprised that the working class treats the intelligentsia with suspicion, sneers at its members as high-brows, makes use of them, and without a doubt looks forward to the day when it can throw them overboard, as the Bolsheviks did in the Russian Revolution?

There is all the difference in the world between demanding justice for the workers, and proposing to place political power in their inexperienced hands. It is the difference between cooperating with the working class and surrendering to it. The former may be healthy; the latter establishes false relationships and can therefore only end disastrously. It is one of the glories of Fascism that it brings this cant and humbug to an end. It restores independence and dignity, initiative and responsibility to the middle class, and to the intelligentsia of all classes by giving them a place in the social system; for the intelligentsia of the working class suffers like that of other classes from the prevailing false social idealism. The political labor movement is to a large extent an artificial creation of the middle-class intelligentsia; it is not the workers but a number of intellectuals and representatives of a high degree of culture who show a strong aversion from the bourgeois spirit, and dream of being delivered from it. "Left to themselves," says a recent biographer of Marx, "working men are inclined to a cloudy sentimental Socialism. Scientific Communism could scarcely have been evolved except by a *bourgeois* intellectual; and it was those typical products of a typical *bourgeois* upbringing, Marx and Engels, who imposed on the working class the doctrine of an all-conquering proletariat." (*Karl Marx* by E. H. Carr, p. 51.) And I may add even the atheism of the proletariat is *bourgeois*, an inheritance from the "Age of Enlightenment". What is more, the only economic ideas of working-class origin — Trade Unionism and Cooperation — have no validity according to the Marxian system.

The fiction that only the working class is capable of healthy social initiative has already been disproved by events; and the time has come when the lip-service that is still paid to the idea should be repudiated because it stands in the way of that new orientation of political thought which is indispensable to a revival of political faith and idealism. The decline of the British Labor Party and corresponding parties on the Continent is no accident. It was foreseen by many; for all democratic parties tend to lose effective strength in proportion as they grow in numbers. Since they have all been built up more by sinking differences than by the triumph of a definite creed, they are not in possession of a common mind, and for that reason the voice they raise is the voice of protest and negation rather than of a prophetic and constructive vision. Members of such parties can unite in protests against war, on behalf of the unemployed, to improve labor conditions, and in attacks upon capital. But their points of agreement are superficial, while their disagreements are fundamental; and so it is always an open question how long they can survive. Having put their trust in numbers rather than in clarity of thought, their faith has become an amorphous conglomeration of conflicting beliefs, and, as experience proves, the shock of reality invariably exposes their weakness.

The delegate who said at a British Labor Party Conference, "It does not matter what we say so long as we all say the same thing", voiced the unacknowledged assumption on which democratic politics are based, and at the same time exposed their futility. The tragedy of the Labor Party is that it is perishing for the lack of ideas which it knows it needs, but which there is no possibility of its ever being able to get. The reasons are twofold: first because having made the attainment of power its primary objective, it instinctively resists new ideas, since all new ideas are disruptive and fatal to Party unity; and secondly because no idea can reach the Labor movement until it has been endorsed by that section of the middle-class intelligentsia who control publicity; and as the experience of that section of the intelligentsia is an exceptional and highly specialized one, they naturally fail to see the significance of ideas beyond their purview, and do not support them. It is for such reasons that the Labor Party does not really represent the working class, but a small section of the middle class in rebellion against the world as *they* find it; not as the working class finds it, or even as the middle class generally finds it.

Viewed in this light, Fascism in England at any rate promises to perform a valuable service to the Labor movement by drawing from it the middle-class intelligentsia whose activities obscure the Labor point of view; and so clear the way for a real cooperation between the middle and working class. But when this is accomplished, class politics will have become a thing of the past. At any rate it is to be hoped so, for class politics do not coincide with spiritual realities; nor for that matter with economic ones, as the Labor Party is finding out. And they cannot be made to coincide, because spiritual activity cuts right across class divisions, and economic activity is but its dim reflection. What happens on the spiritual plane has its repercussions lower down.

According to Berdyaev, Bolshevism will triumph all over the World unless in the meantime a thoroughgoing Christianity can be revived, which will grapple with the social question, accepting all that is true and rejecting all that is false in Communism. Fundamentally, no doubt, the proposition is correct, when all the implications of Christianity are understood. For Christianity is the exact antithesis of materialist Communism, and therefore Bolshevism cannot be finally conquered until the world returns to Christianity; moreover it may be that in Russia, where Bolshevism is triumphant, there is no other way of fighting it. But it does not follow from this that a boundary may not be put to the spread of Bolshevism elsewhere by other means. The success of Fascism in combating it is proof of this. I incline to the opinion of Mr. Hoffman that in the future Fascism will get the better of Communism "because at the height of the crisis, when the Red monster's approach is very near, the Fascists will be able to persuade the wavering middle that their cause is the cause of traditional and familiar things, whereupon the middle will break in panic and rush to the Right".

And yet in the long run this cannot be unless Fascism faces the problem of machinery in a much more realistic way than it does at present; for machinery is destroying traditional and familiar things at such an alarming rate that unless its use is drastically curtailed there will be no traditional and familiar things left to rally round and the persuasion will lose its force. That is finally the logic of the situation. Bolshevism owes its existence to the unrestricted use of machinery, and it must triumph all over the world if machinery is to continue unrestricted. For though I am of opinion that the revival of Christianity is necessary to a solution of the problem, a Christianity which does not face mechanization, treating machinery as neutral, will be unable to grapple with the problems of the modern world, and will be swept aside by the triumphant machine.

The Marxian Philosophy of History

Harold J Laski and Liberalism

Ross J. S. Hoffman

Although it is true that our contemporary communists often seem to be mere epigones of the great eighteenth-century revolutionaries — often appear, indeed, as but the inheritors of a tradition now degraded and stripped of its one-time nobility and moral grandeur — there is one important respect in which the communist mind of today excels the revolutionary mind of a century and a half ago. And it is this: the communist intellectual whose mind has been formed by Marx, Engels, and Lenin has a better historic sense, that is, a greater respect for the past and a clearer concept of its reality than had, say, Condorcet or Rousseau. Full credit for this merit often is withheld from communist thinkers because of their hostility to certain traditions and their ideal vision of a world brought to peace and order without religion, or to be more specific, without that Christian religion which informed our Western culture with its quite unique historic sense; that is, an awareness of origins, a perception of direction in the march of events through time, and a powerful cementing bond between present and past generations.

Yet it should be obvious that Marxian sociology is profoundly historical in its character, that it is based inseparably upon a certain theory of history which professes to comprehend our whole recorded past. The real Marxist is no Utopian dreamer conceiving the advent of the New Jerusalem as a possible event of tomorrow, could an irrational world but be won to reason. He is on the contrary an historical philosopher contemplating the processes of social evolution, ever studying their trend with an eye to opportunity for the intervention of a revolutionary will, taking realistic account, so to speak, of the historical justice of the moment. History he conceives as a progress, rather mechanistic than organic to be sure, but not, as Condorcet imagined, a progress realized by mysterious successive leaps of human virtue and reason. For the Marxist of today has enriched the eighteenth-century idea of progress with a vast quantity of new factual data and with the nineteenth- and twentieth-century concepts of evolution and historical relativity. This is the reason why he is commonly able — no less than the genuine historian concerned only with the concrete actuality of the past — to discern the emptiness of the old "philosophies of history"; to see how, as it were, these were imposed by metaphysics upon history, rather than elicited from history by careful and objective study of the documented past.

It is true that the Marxist makes exception here for his own philosophy of history, believing it to be verified by the facts, and he therefore stands apart from thinkers who reject the whole concept of the "philosophy of history". It is also true that this exception is not warranted, since the Marxian historical doctrine no less than that of Comte and Hegel lies open to the accusation of being a transcendental search for the causation and end of the historical process: a search, that is, for what the human mind, from its very nature and constitution, is unable to discover. Marx himself, for all his hard and painful fact-gathering, was not a strict scientist humbly soliciting the meaning of data ascertained; rather was he primarily a revolutionist bent on establishing a new social order. History was moving toward that end, so he believed, but his belief derived less from historical study than from the philosophy of atheist materialism which he brought to that study; and the same is true of his disciples. Nevertheless it is important to remember that Marx turned away (not so much from despair, I suspect, as from hatred) from all metaphysics and mystery; that he would follow no line of thought that might lead to religion, and that, leaving all such momentous questions, he riveted his attention upon the social process, seeking to discover (and by a truly scientific method) exactly what took place when one historical situation was succeeded by another.

Therein one may find the reason for the richness of his thought and its inestimable value for historical study. For what he did was essentially this: he set up an hypothesis (the materialistic interpretation of history) and sought by an elaborate inquiry to show this as true. It led him, and also both his disciples and opponents, to extensive new investigations of the past; it provoked questions and problems that had not previously arisen or been noticed; it broadened and intensified research into the whole history of human culture, bringing forth (as does every new scientific hypothesis) fresh studies and placing neglected matters under the focus of the mind. But the special point of emphasis here is this, that all genuine Marxians have recognized an obligation to leave no phenomenon of history, no event, no sequence or relationship, unaccounted for in their social theory. Confident in the validity of their dogmas of dialectic materialism and the determination of the social process by the relations of economic production, they have dared to confront the whole human past, scrutinize it closely, and that without neglecting or shrinking from any part of it, but claiming all of it and arranging all of it in a comprehensive pattern.

Hence it is that no genuine Marxist, however strong his hatred of religion, would neglect to give important treatment to spiritual factors in history, because he is conscious of a very special obligation to deal with these in such fashion as to show them to be a reflex of the social-economic arrangement. Thought, religion, the various manifestations of the spirit, all this he is far from ignoring or sweeping aside as unreal. The power of ideas, once they have arisen out of a given social order, he knows to be very great, for indeed he is in constant battle with them. It is obvious enough, I think, that men who affirm a strict doctrine, who reprove and punish heretics, who make the fight upon bourgeois mentality and the Christian religion a supreme issue of the day, will hardly fail to discern the importance of spiritual forces in history. And here one touches the reason why the Marxian mind, in its historical sense, not only is superior to the rationalist mind of the eighteenth century but excels also the later positivist mind as expressed in nineteenth-century historiography. It asks more questions, it searches for more relationships, and it demands analysis of much which Ranke and his disciples simply ignored.

Nowhere have I found better illustration of this than in the recent study of the rise of European liberalism* by Professor Laski, who has now placed himself in nearly complete allegiance to Marxian thought. His book is a genuine masterpiece and easily takes first place amongst all the studies of the genesis, development and implications of modern liberalism. The fact that it is permeated by mistaken philosophy and a spirit that cannot fail to arouse opposition from Christian and traditionalist minds hardly detracts at all from its value as a work of sound and rich learning. For Laski not only has succeeded in defining clearly what liberalism has been, and in discovering its initial manifestations, but also has traced out in masterful manner the whole assault, on every front, which the capitalist spirit and an atomizing individualism have made upon the traditional structure of Western society. The history of liberalism as doctrine and morality, acting like an acid upon social Christendom, is most admirably set forth and quite without any failure to do justice to the conservative-traditionalist mind of the last five centuries. No phase of the momentous experiment in absolute individualist autonomy is neglected, and all is woven skillfully together as the history of one great phenomenon of post-mediaeval culture. We have here, in short, a most thoughtful and informing book – Laski's best, I think. And its high excellence derives in great measure from the fact that he is able, at the very beginning of his essay, to isolate the germ of the liberal disease, and thereafter to keep his eye riveted continuously upon it.

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* THE RISE OF LIBERALISM *by Harold J. Laski* (HARPERS. 337 pp. $3.00).

What is this germ? When appeared the first manifestations of liberalism? Not with the Protestant Revolution; Laski is far too shrewd to fancy (as I fear many critics of liberalism still imagine) that liberalism issued from Protestantism. There was a Protestant contribution to its growth, of course, and the severance of papal obedience broke the chains of authority, enabling the liberal movement ultimately to win its way. ("For let us remember," writes Professor Laski, "that the Reformation is, above all, a revolt against Papalism.") But the origins of liberalism are in the Renaissance release of appetites, not in the Protestant reform of religion. I quote:

> By the end of the fifteenth century the *capitalist spirit* (italics mine) began to attain a predominant hold over men's minds. What does this imply? That the pursuit of wealth for its own sake became the chief motive of human activity. Whereas in the Middle Ages the idea of acquiring wealth was limited by a body of moral rules imposed under the sanction of religious authority, after 1500 those rules, and the institutions, habits, and ideas to which they had given birth, were no longer deemed adequate. They were evaded, criticized, abandoned, because it was felt that they interfered with the exploitation of the means of production. New conceptions were needed to legitimize the new potentialities of wealth that men had discovered little by little in preceding ages. The liberal doctrine is the philosophic justification of the new practices.

In writing this Mr. Laski has put his finger on the very essence of the liberal movement, and it does not escape from his touch at any time, but ever appears clearly before him as the method and doctrine devised to enfranchise and rationalize the unrestricted appetites of capitalist individualism.

> A social conception of wealth gives place to an individualist conception. The idea of a divine sanction for the rules of behavior is gradually replaced by a utilitarian sanction. And the principle of utility is no longer determined by reference to social good. Its meaning is taken from the desire to satisfy individual want. . . . Once this attitude begins to obtain hold over men's minds, it develops a revolutionary power. It . . . implies a society which is dynamic and anti-traditional because, since the desire for wealth is endless, it must continuously seek experiment and novelty.

For as Mr. Laski remarks in another connection,

> the inner idea of capitalism is inherently a philosophy of life. Those who accept it do not need extra-capitalist sources to validate their activities. Their search for wealth as individuals colors and shapes their attitude to every department of behavior. Unless this had been the case, capitalism could not have achieved the revolution it effected. There was no sphere of life in which it did not encounter norms of conduct resistant to its spirit. Without exception, it transformed them, or sought to do so. . . . The whole ethos of capitalism, in a word, is its effort to free the owner of the instruments of production from the need to obey rules which inhibit his full exploitation of them. The rise of liberalism is the rise of a doctrine which seeks to justify the operation of that ethos.

Now in presenting these admirable quotations and in writing of this book in so commendatory a fashion, I am far from inferring that it is without any serious defects. These are present and even conspicuous. There is, for example, Mr. Laski's continuous and wholly unsuccessful effort to relate every manifestation of the liberal development to the interests and activities of the so-called middle class – as if only the members of this class were infected with the capitalist spirit, and only these desired to break restraints upon economic appetites! This is, I think, the weakest feature of the book. Again, it may be remarked that Mr. Laski's thought is clouded on a point of such capital importance as to be vital for the whole Marx-Laski theory of history. I refer to the matter of the origins of liberalism so admirably dealt with in the foregoing quoted passages. The author there writes of the *capitalist spirit taking hold upon men's minds*, implying very clearly that some change of a moral and spiritual character was taking place in Christendom, causing men to be less resistant to the temptations of greedy appetite.

Very good, but does Mr. Laski actually locate causation here in the spiritual rather than the economic order? He does nothing of the kind, for he also writes this: "If we ask why the capitalist spirit triumphed, the answer, surely, is the sufficient one that within the confines of the older system the potentialities of production could no longer be exploited." Now I submit that this answer is very far from being sufficient, that it is in fact a mere begging of the question. For it is absurd to say that men who regard economic appetites as properly governable by moral authority will then deny that authority if it interferes with the satisfaction of appetites, unless, of course, they have decided to change their morals. Evidently

Mr. Laski's Marxism will not allow him to open wide his eyes to the plain fact (which he seems at times to glimpse for a moment) that liberalism originated in the spiritual and not in the economic order. "What produced liberalism," he says, "was the emergence of a new economic society at the end of the Middle Ages"; but there were moments when, in writing this excellent book, he knew better and saw more clearly.

One may also complain with justice against the book on a few other counts: for example, the failure to appreciate how much the strength of liberalism derived from appeal to lost traditional moral values; which failure is due of course to the author's determination to make of liberalism a purely class manifestation, reflecting the interests and appetites of the bourgeoisie. But all this may be forgiven in a book which delineates so clearly the evolution of the liberal movement – obedient always to its original nature and logical implications – to the point reached in the social ruin of our day. One may dissent sharply from Mr. Laski's judgement of the future and of the way that we must take if economic and moral order are to be restored; one may detest what Mr. Laski likes and shrink in horror from the implications of his intellectual position; but there is no denying that he has helped greatly to illuminate the way that led us to the present pass.

Portrait of a Friend

G. K. Chesterton

In the days when Belloc was known to Bentley and Oldershaw, but not to me, when they were all together in the Radical group at Oxford, Belloc himself chiefly frequented a much smaller group which called itself the Republican Club. So far as I can make out, the Republican Club never consisted of more than four members, and generally of less; one or more of them having been solemnly expelled either for Toryism or for Socialism. This was the club which Belloc celebrated in the fine dedication of his first book; of which two lines have passed into some popular celebrity, "There's nothing worth the wear of winning but laughter and the love of friends"; but in the course of which he also described in more detail the ideals of this fastidious fellowship.

We kept the Rabelaisian plan
We dignified the dainty cloisters
With Natural Law, the Rights of Man,
Song, Stoicism, Wine, and Oysters.

We taught the art of writing things
On men we still would like to throttle,
And where to get the blood of kings
At only half-a-crown a bottle.

Of the three other corners of this very Foursquare

Gospel of Citizenship, that is of Belloc's three constant colleagues in the old Republican Club, one is still, I believe, a distinguished exile and official in Burma; or as his old friend loved to say with sour smiles of affectionate resignation, "a Satrap"; as if he had somehow Medized or condescended to the Oriental barbarism which we call Imperialism. I have no doubt that as a fact he was a happy and highly satisfactory Satrap; but he was the one member of the group whom I never met. The other two Republicans, who were Belloc's most intimate friends at Oxford, have both in different ways played a considerable part in my own life. One was John Swinnerton Phillimore, son of the old Admiral whose name made a sort of background for the Kensington of my boyhood, afterwards Latin Professor at Glasgow University and one of the first classical authorities of his time; now alas, only an ever-deepening memory. The other was Francis Yvon Eccles, the distinguished French scholar, whom I now meet all too seldom through his gravitation towards living in France.

Eccles, like Belloc, was the child of one French and one English parent; but there was a certain misleading comedy about the names, as if they had been interchanged like labels. For Eccles, who happened to have the English surname, looked much more like a Frenchman, and Belloc, with the French surname, much more like an Englishman; indeed, he ended by being the one solitary but symbolic Englishman really looking like the traditional John Bull. It is true that he reached this traditional type through the possession of a square chin like that of the great Emperor of the French, and the subsequent assumption of side-whiskers to satisfy the conventions of the Spaniards. But the combined effect of these foreign influences was that he looked exactly like what all English farmers ought to look like; and was, as it were, a better portrait of Cobbett than Cobbett was. Moreover, the symbol was true; for the roots that hold him to the Downs and the deep plowlands of South England were even deeper, so far as instinct is concerned, than the marble foundations of the abstract Republic of the Republican Club. I remember drinking a pot of beer with a publican not far from Horsham and mentioning my friend's name; and the publican, who obviously had never heard of books or such bosh, merely said, "Farms a bit, doesn't he?" and I thought how hugely flattered Belloc would be.

I knew Eccles in Fleet Street, from the first days of the old Pro-Boer *Speaker*, of which he was largely the literary adviser; yet it was always inevitable to think of him as sitting outside a café in Paris rather than London. His head, his hat, his arched eyebrows and wrinkled forehead of quite disinterested curiosity, his Mephistophelean tuft, his type of patient lucidity, were far more French than his friend with the French name. Whether or no these externals commonly correspond to characters, they certainly do not always correspond to careers. Thus, John Phillimore, the son of a sailor and coming largely of a family of sailors, himself looked very much more like a sailor than like a don. His dark compact figure and bright brown face might have been on any quarter-deck. On the other hand, by another such carnival comedy of exchange, I always thought that his cousin, who is, I believe, a distinguished Admiral, looked much more like a don or a professor. But John Phillimore, as things fell out, had to be a rather unique sort of don; and at once a popular and a pugnacious professor. You could not conduct classes amid the racial and religious chaos of Glasgow, full of wild Highlanders and wild Irish, and young fanatical Communists and old fanatical Calvinists, without possessing some of the qualities of the quarter-deck. Most of the stories about Phillimore read like tales of mutiny on the high seas. It was shrewdly said of him that the effect of the word, "gentlemen", as said by him, was like the famous effect of the word, "Quirites!" as said by Caesar. On a similar occasion an insubordinate but intelligent Glasgow crowd seems to have instantly grasped the gratifying irony of his appeal, "Gentlemen, gentlemen! I have not yet ceased casting my pearls."

The chief fact relevant to this chapter, however, is that Belloc's career began with the ideals of the Republican Club. To those who talk about ideals, but do not think about ideas, it may seem odd that both he and Eccles have ended as strong Monarchists. But there is a thin difference between good despotism and good democracy; both imply equality with authority, whether the authority be impersonal or personal. What both detest is oligarchy; even in its more human form of aristocracy, let alone its present repulsive form of plutocracy. Belloc's first faith was in the impersonal authority of the Republic, and he concentrated on its return in the eighteenth century, but rather specially touching its military aspect. His first two books were the very fine monographs on the two most famous of the French Revolutionists; and he was, in that sense, heartily revolutionary. But I mention the matter here for a special reason, in connection with something in which he was and is rather unique in this country; native and rooted as is his real relation to this country. I have already remarked that to know him well is to know that, as a man, he is English and not French. But there is another aspect in his curious case. In so far as he is a traditionalist, he is an English traditionalist. But when he was specially a revolutionist, he was in the very exact sense a French Revolutionist. It might be roughly symbolized by saying he was an English poet but a French soldier.

Now I thought I knew all about Revolutionists long before I met the representative of the Republican Club. I had talked to them in dirty taverns or untidy studios, or more depressing vegetarian hostels. I knew there were differences in cut and color; and that some were more really revolutionary than others. I knew that some wore pale green neckties and gave lectures on decorative art; while some wore red neckties and made speeches on Trade Union platforms. I have sung "The Red Flag" in hearty chorus with the latter, and William Morris's "England, Awake" in more refined accents with the former. And though I knew nothing of the comparison with another method, I did more and more realize, with an ever sinking heart, that for some reason we had not got a decent revolutionary song to our name; and that in the matter of producing any respectable sort of Hymn of Hate, my countrymen were a washout.

One weakness of these popular war-songs was that they were not war-songs. They never had the faintest hint of how anybody could ever make war on anything. They were always waiting for the Dawn; without the least anticipation that they might be shot at dawn, or the least intelligent preparation for shooting anybody else at dawn. "England, awake; the long long night is over; faint in the east behold the dawn appear." They were all like that; they were all Songs Before Sunrise; as if the sun that rose on the just and the unjust did not also rise on the conquered and the conqueror. But the English revolutionary poet wrote as if he owned the sun and was certain to be the conqueror. In other words, I found that the Socialist idea of war was exactly like the Imperialist idea of war; and I was strengthened and deepened in my detestation of both of them. I have heard many arguments against the idea of a Class War; but the argument which discredits it for me is the fact that the Socialists, like the Imperialists, always assumed that they would win the war. I am no Fascist; but the March on Rome gave them the surprise they needed. To say the least, it considerably halted the inevitable proletarian triumph; just as the Boers had halted the inevitable British triumph. And I do not like inevitable triumphs. Also I do not believe in them. I do not think that any social solution, even a more manly one like that of Morris, should be called "as sure as that tomorrow's sun will rise".

And then Belloc wrote a poem called "The Rebel"; and nobody noticed the interesting point about it. It is a very violent and bitter poem; it would be much too revolutionary for most of the revolutionists; even those with red ties would blush, and those with pale green ties would turn pale and green with sickness, at such threats against the rich as break out here: "And slit their pictures in their frames . . . and hack their horses at the knees and hew to death their timber trees"; and the very fine ending, "and all these things I mean to do; for fear perhaps my little son should break his hands, as I have done".

That is not a Song Before Sunrise. That is an attack before sunrise. But the peculiar point I wish to note here appears in the previous verse about the actual nature of the attack. It is the only revolutionary poem I ever read that suggested that there was any plan for making any attack. The first two lines of the verse run: "When we find them where they stand, a mile of men on either hand." The Comrades of the Dawn always seemed to be marching in column, and singing. They never seemed to have heard of deploying; into the long line that faces the foe for battle. The next two lines are: "I mean to charge from right away, and force the flanks of their array." Who ever heard of the Comrades of the Dawn having so complicated an idea as that of turning the enemy's flank? Then comes the encirclement:

And press them inward from the plains,
And drive them clamouring down the lanes,
And gallop and harry and have them down,
And carry the gates and hold the town.

The Pursuit; and then the Holding of the Bridgehead.

Now that is the only Song of the Class War I ever read that has the haziest notion of what a war would be like. In this wild lyric, full of vindictive violence and destruction, there is also in quite swift lyrical form a perfectly clear tactical plan and military map; a definite description of how men may storm a fortress, if it has to be stormed. The violence of this democratic, though doubtless dramatic, utterance goes far beyond anything that any Communist will reach in a hundred years. But it involves also the real character of battle; and a battle, like every human work, is at once designed in its beginning and doubtful in its end. Now the Comrades of the Dawn already annoyed me; because their revolution was wildly undesigned in its beginning, but had no doubt about its end. Just like Imperialism; and the South African War.

That is what I mean by saying that Belloc is an English poet but a French soldier. The man at rest, and therefore the man in reality, is the man of Sussex; but he has been enlarged, or some would say infected, by the foreign influence of those who have known real revolutions and invasions; and if he were called upon to conduct a revolution, he would conduct it as logically as a Parisian mob still conducts a riot. As he once remarked, such a democratic mob can deploy. But I have only taken this chance example to illustrate a general truth about a very remarkable man. I have taken the fact that the ordinary song of revolt is only militant, but his is also military. I mean that it is full of the notion, not only of fighting for the faith, but of getting to grips with the fact. If we are going to fight the rich, or fight the revolt against the rich, or fight resistance to a reasonable redistribution of riches, or fight anything else, this is how it is done. And when I remember all the other romantic revolutionary songs it does not at all surprise me, at least in this country, to realize that no fighting has been done.

Now that is exactly how his contemporaries have missed the whole whole point about Belloc at every point of his action; for instance, in his historic study of the Servile State. Because the English, of whom I am one, are romantic, and because they delight in the romance that the French are romantic, and delight in the more delirious romance that Belloc is French, they have simply been stone-blind to him when he is entirely scientific. His study of the Servile State is as strictly scientific as a military map is military. There is nothing romantic about it; nothing rollicking about it; nothing even particularly amusing about it, except the two admirable words, "this fool", which occur in the calm procession of a million impartial words, in the chapter on the Practical Man. And even excepting that is like accusing Euclid of making a joke, when he proves a proposition with a *reductio ad absurdum.* Anyone who knows the place of reason in the modern scheme can imagine what happened. First, before reading what Belloc wrote, the critics started to criticize what Belloc would probably write. They said he threatened us with a horrible nightmare called the Servile State. As a fact, it was his whole point that it was not a nightmare, but something that we were already almost as habituated to accepting as to accepting the daylight. All the time, a thesis as pivotal as that of Adam Smith or Darwin is hardly realized, or even criticized, by anybody as what it is, though it has been criticized quite wildly, conjecturally and at random, as everything that it isn't. Bernard Shaw roundly asserted that it was a mere revival of Herbert Spencer's description of all dependence on the State as slavery. And when we pointed out that he could not have read a page of Belloc's book if he really thought it was like Herbert Spencer's book, he replied with characteristic gayety that it was Herbert Spencer's that he had not read. Many supposed that it was a sort of satiric description of a Socialist State; something between Laputa and *Brave New World*. Others seem still to suppose that the Servile State is a general term for any tyranny or oppressive official State; and even use the term currently in that sense. For it is typical of our time and country that, while no one could say the book was popular, the title of the book was immediately and vastly popular. There was a time when errand-boys and porters said "Servile State"; they did not know what it meant; but they knew about as much as the reviewers and even the dons.

The thesis of the book is that the Socialist movement does not lead to Socialism. This is partly because of compromise and cowardice; but partly also because men have a dim indestructible respect for property, even in its disgusting disguise of modern monopoly. Therefore, instead of the intentional result, Socialism, we shall have the unintentional resultant: Slavery. The compromise will take the form of saying, "We must feed the poor; we won't rob the rich; so we will tell the rich to feed the poor, handing them over to be the permanent servants of a master-class, to be maintained whether they are working or no, and in return for that complete maintenance giving a complete obedience." All this, or the beginnings of it, can be seen in a hundred modern changes, from such things as Insurance Acts, which divide citizens by law into two classes of masters and servants, to all sorts of proposals for preventing strikes and lockouts by compulsory arbitration. Any law that sends a man back to his work, when he wants to leave it, is in plain fact a Fugitive Slave Law.

Now I take that one example of a scientific thesis, maintained in a purely scientific way, to show how very little the intellectual importance of Belloc's work has been understood. The reason of that misunderstanding lies in the other fact about him, which is really foreign and relatively French: the habit of separating in his own mind the scientific from the artistic; the ornamental from the useful. It is true that when a Frenchman designs a park as an ornamental park, the paths are very curly indeed because they are only ornamental. When he designs a road, he makes it as straight as a ramrod, like the roads down which French soldiers used to march with all their ramrods; because a road is meant to be useful and is most short when it is straight. Belloc's little Arcadian lyric, "When I was not much older than Cupid and bolder", is very like an ornamental French garden; and his book on the Servile State is very like a French military road. No man is more instinctively witty; and no man can be more intentionally dull.

These two voices of Belloc, so to speak, were so distinct that he could sometimes pass from one to the other and make it seem like two persons speaking; effecting a transition on a platform almost as dramatic as the dialogue of a ventriloquist with his doll. When he stood as a Liberal member for Salford, he often managed to bewilder his hecklers by spraying them with these sharply alternated showers of cold and hot water. Salford was a poor and popular constituency, in which there were many strata of simple and provincial people, retaining the prejudices of our great-grandfathers; one of them being the touching belief that anybody with a French name could be made to cower and grovel by any allusion to the Battle of Waterloo. This was probably the only battle of which the heckler himself had ever heard; and his information about it was limited to the partly inaccurate statement that it was won by the English. He therefore used to call out at intervals, "Who won Waterloo?" And Belloc would affect to take this with grave exactitude, as a technical question put to him upon a tactical problem, and would reply with the laborious lucidity of a lecturer, "The issue of Waterloo was ultimately determined chiefly by Colborne's manoeuver in the center, supported by the effects of Van der Smitzen's battery earlier in the engagement. The Prussian failure in synchrony was not sufficiently extensive, etc." And then, while the unfortunate patriot in the audience was still endeavoring to grapple with this unexpected growth of complexity in the problem he had propounded, Belloc would suddenly change his own note to the ringing directness of the demagogue, would openly boast of the blood of that Pyrenean soldier who had followed the revolutionary army of Napoleon, and risen in its ranks, through all the victories that established a code of justice all over a continent and restored citizenship to civilization. "It is good democratic blood; and I am not ashamed of it."

This transition of tone had a tremendous effect, the whole hall rose at him roaring with applause and the investigator of the Belgian campaign was left isolated. But that is exactly the point; that he really was isolated. It is a point, not only in the subtlety of that blend of French and English blood; but also of the rather special subtlety of the English. The English are insular, not so much in the sense of being insolent but simply of being ignorant; but they are not spiteful. Other things being equal, they would rather cheer a Frenchman who was proud of being a Frenchman, as they cheered Napoleon's Marshal at the Coronation of Queen Victoria, than remind him of Napoleon's misfortune at Waterloo. And the same interesting distinction cuts the other way also. We have been told in a tiresome way from childhood about something that was called French rhetoric. To our shame, we have forgotten that there was until very lately a noble thing called English rhetoric. And as distinct from his irony or his objective scientific militarism, the rhetoric of Belloc was thoroughly English rhetoric. There was nothing in it that could not have been said by Cobbett, or even by Fox, in the days the genuine English Radical could address the genuine English crowd. What has weakened that direct popular appeal has been the change that turned nearly all Englishmen into a sort of imitation Londoners; and the rhetoric of Westminster grew more and more pompous and hypocritical while the wit of Whitechapel grew more and more acrid and flippant. But it has been possible, even in my own time, to hear occasionally the voice historic, and virile English demagogues, talking in plain English about primary emotions. Nobody ever did it better, when he chose, than old John Burns, for whom I have spoken and voted so often in the days when I lived in Battersea. To mention one case, as a sort of model; it was natural enough that the old Dock Strike agitator, having become a Cabinet Minister and in many ways a rather Conservative force, should be assailed by more revolutionary groups as an extinct volcano if not a surrendered fortress. But Burns knew how to deal with that sort of thing when speaking to democrats; by cutting deeper into human facts instead of sliding away upon legal fictions. He was taunted by some Socialists at a Battersea meeting with not having opposed the Royal Grant to Queen Mary or some princess at the celebrations on the appearance of an heir. I can imagine how the smoother sort of Lib.-Lab. social climber, passing through Parliament into the governing class, would explain away his position in terms of the etiquette of the House. John Burns said, "I am the son of my mother and the husband of my wife. And if you ask me to put a public insult upon a woman who has just borne a child, I will not do it." That is English rhetoric; and it is as good as any in the world.

But while it is quite a mistake to suppose that there was anything particularly French about the direct democratic oratory that Belloc used in those days, there was another quality which he also used, which I think may really be called a rather French specialty. We generally have some very silly and inadequate notion in our minds when we talk about French wit; and the full richness of that fruit of culture is seldom covered even when we talk of French irony. For the best French irony is nothing so simple as merely saying one thing and meaning the opposite. It is at once exhibiting and withdrawing, in one flash, a series of aspects of a thing; like a man twirling a jewel with twenty facets. And the more brief it is, the more flippant it is, the more seemingly superficial it is, the more there is in that irony an element of mystery. There is always a touch of bewilderment, for the simple, in the tale of such tags as that of Voltaire: "To succeed in the world it is not sufficient to be stupid, you must also be well-mannered." Curiously enough, there is exactly that quality in an ordinary military dispatch, sent out by a very silent and practical soldier; by Foch at the supreme crisis of the Marne. "My right is hard pressed; my left is retreating; situation excellent; I attack." For it might be all sorts of things besides the quite prosaic and practical thing that it is; it might be a paradox; or a boast; or a bitter jest of despair; and all the time it is in fact a quite correct description of the advantages of his own immediate tactical situation, as exact as a military map. I have never so vividly felt that there was really something French about Belloc than when he would from time to time suddenly say things like that on a public platform before an entirely puzzled audience. I remember once when he was lecturing on the same campaign in the Great War; a purely technical lecture full of plans and figures. And he paused to say parenthetically that perhaps nobody would ever understand why Von Kluck made his one big blunder before Paris. "Perhaps," said Belloc, like a man bemused, "perhaps he was inspired."

Now you can make all sorts of things out of that; in all sorts of opposite directions. You could make it a Voltairean sneer at divine inspiration, and the disasters it brings; or a dark mysterious judgement like that suggested when "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart", or all kinds of other fine shades between the two. But you could never be quite certain that you had got to the bottom of it. So that shining ornamental pond which looks so shallow, and is called French wit, is indeed the deepest of all wells, and truth lies at the bottom of it. Finally, it may be remarked, that this very diversity in one man's methods, and his own habit of keeping these diverse things distinct, is the explanation of the accident by which many people have been disappointed or bewildered or even bored by Belloc in different aspects; because they were looking for the revelation of one of the legends about him, when he happened to be concentrating with cold ferocity on something much more prosaic or precise. In debating with Bernard Shaw about the Law of Rent, he observed austerely that if they were discussing economics, he would discuss economics, but if Mr. Shaw was making jokes he would be happy to reply in comic verse. To which Mr. Shaw, ever ready to rise to a sporting event, pursued the subject in some delightful doggerel; which Belloc acknowledged with the song about "the strip to the south of the Strand"; then including the Adelphi. But it is typical that his song simply was a song, and could have been sung in any pub as a drinking-song.

One of the most amusing events of my life occurred when I took the chair for a private celebration of Belloc's sixtieth birthday. There were about forty people assembled, nearly all of them were what is called important in the public sense, and the rest were even more important in the private sense; as being his nearest intimates and connections. To me it was that curious experience, something between the Day of Judgement and a dream, in which men of many groups known to me at many times all appeared together as a sort of resurrection. Anybody will understand that feeling who has had, as most people have had, the experience of some total stranger stopping him in the street and saying, "And how are the old set?" On such occasions I become acutely conscious of having belonged to a large number of old sets. Most of the people I knew well enough; but some of the younger I had known quite lately and others long ago; and they included, as do all such gatherings, those whom I had intended to enquire about, and never carried out my intention. Anyhow, they were of all sorts except the stupid sort; and the renewed comradeship stirred in me the memory of a hundred controversies. There was my old friend Bentley, who dated from my first days at school; and Eccles, who reminded me of the earliest political rows of the Pro-Boers; and Jack Squire (now Sir John), who first floated into my circle in the days of *The Eye-Witness* and my brother's campaign against corruption; and Duff Cooper, a rising young politician I had met but a month or so before, and A. P. Herbert of somewhat similar age; and the brilliant journalist I had long known as *Beachcomber*, and only recently known as Morton. It was to be, and was, a very jolly evening; there were to be no speeches. It was specially impressed upon me that there were to be no speeches. Only I, as presiding, was to be permitted to say a few words in presenting Belloc with a golden goblet modelled on certain phrases in his heroic poem in praise of wine, which ends by asking that such a golden cup should be the stirrup-cup of his farewell to friends:

And sacramental raise me the divine
Strong brother in God and last companion, wine.

I merely said a few words to the effect that such a ceremony might have been as fitting thousands of years ago, at the festival of a great Greek poet; and that I was confident that Belloc's sonnets and strong verse would remain like the cups and the carved epics of the Greeks. He acknowledged it briefly, with a sad good humor, saying he found that, by the age of sixty, he did not care very much whether his verse remained or not. "But I am told," he added with suddenly reviving emphasis, "I am told that you begin to care again frightfully when you are seventy. In which case, I hope I shall die at sixty-nine." And then we settled down to the feast of old friends, which was to be so happy because there were no speeches.

Towards the end of the dinner, somebody whispered to me that it would perhaps be better if a word were said in acknowledgment of the efforts of somebody else whose name I forget, who was supposed to have arranged the affair. I therefore briefly thanked him; and he still more briefly thanked me, but added that it was quite a mistake, because the real author of the scheme was Johnnie Morton, otherwise *Beachcomber*, who sat immediately on his right. Morton rose solemnly to acknowledge the abruptly transferred applause; glanced to his own right, and warmly thanked whoever happened to be sitting there (I think it was Squire) for having inspired him with this grand conception of a banquet for Belloc. Squire arose, and with many courteous gestures, explained that the gentleman on his own right, Mr. A. P. Herbert, had been the true and deep and ultimate inspiration of this great idea; and that it was only fitting that the secret of his initiative should be now revealed. By this time, the logic of the jest was in full gallop and could not be restrained; even if I had wished to restrain it. A. P. Herbert rose to the occasion with superb presence of mind, and gave the series quite a new and original turn. He is an excellent speaker; and, as we all know, an admirable author; but I never knew before that he is an admirable actor. For some reason best known to himself, he chose to pretend to be the oratorical official of some sort of Workmen's Benevolent Society, like the Oddfellows or the Foresters. He did not need to tell us that he was taking this part; in the tone of his voice, he told it in the first few words. I shall never forget the exactitude of the accent with which he said, "I'm sure, friends, we're all very pleased to see Ex-Druid Chesterton among us this evening." But he also gave his speech a definite logical direction. He said it was not to 'im, but to our old and faithful friend Duff Cooper that this pleasant evening was really due. Duff Cooper, sitting next to him, then rose and in resolute and ringing tones delivered an imitation of a Liberal platform speech, full of invocations of his great leader Lloyd George. He explained, however, that Mr. E. C. Bentley on his right, and not himself, had arranged this tribute to that pillar of political Liberalism, Mr. Belloc. Bentley gave one glance to his own right, and rose with exactly that supercilious gravity that I had seen forty years ago in the debating-clubs of our boyhood; the memory of his balanced eyeglasses and bland solemnity came back to me across my life with such intensity as stirs the tears that are born of time. He said, with his precise enunciation, that he had himself followed through life one simple and sufficient rule. In all problems that arose, he had been content to consult exclusively the opinion of Professor Eccles. In every detail of daily life, in his choice of a wife, of a profession, of a house, of a dinner, he had done no more than carry out whatever Professor Eccles might direct. On the present occasion, any appearance he might have had of arranging the Belloc banquet was in fact a mask for Professor Eccles's influence. Professor Eccles responded in a similar but even more restrained fashion, merely saying that he had been mistaken for the man next to him, the real founder of the feast; and so by fatal and unfaltering steps, the whole process went round the whole table; till every single human being had made a speech. It is the only dinner I have ever attended at which it was literally true that every diner made an after-dinner speech. And that was the very happy ending of that very happy dinner, at which there were to be no speeches.

I did not myself make another speech; though I was far from thinking that there had been too much speechifying. Only certain fragmentary words, a memory of a late Victorian poet whom I knew, Sir William Watson, floated on the surface of my mind; and it was those words that I should have said, if I had said anything. For that the poet said to his friend is all that I could have added, in a merely personal spirit to the many things that were said that night about Hilaire Belloc; and I should not have been ashamed if the words had sounded like a vaunt:

Nor without honour my days ran,
Nor yet without a boast shall end;
For I was Shakespeare's countryman
And were not you my friend?

[A chapter from the *Autobiography of G. K. Chesterton*, to be published in November by Sheed & Ward.]

"To Follow in His Train"

EARL DANIELS

IT WAS a midsummer Sunday morning. The sun came through the stained-glass windows with a subdued, cool light, to make patterns on the floor; beyond open doors, green branches stirred in the wind, and there were glimpses of living blue sky, flecked with clouds. The brass on the altar gleamed; the flowers were fresh; and the office-lights picked out spots of color on the dull wood of the reredos. The congregation was well-dressed and well-mannered; the priest immaculately vested, his voice modulated to soothing correctness as he made an ordered way through the prayer-book service. Here, it would seem, was worship to which no one could take exception. It was worship of propriety and taste, set down in the midst of peace and satisfaction. It was worship, too, which bade fair to leave the worshippers much as they had been, ready with smile and greeting for a friendly priest at the door of the church, for renewal of the commonplaces of conversation, and for the Sunday dinner's plenitude.

Then, for the recessional, they sang "The Son of God Goes Forth to War". Rather, they idled through it, placidly, evenly; so far as one could tell from appearances, unstirred by the heroic words. The organ sank to softness, and there followed the low, benedictional "Amen". But it wasn't benediction. Instead, it jarred; for something had happened which made benediction ironically inappropriate, and the words of the hymn almost a mockery, an indictment of those who sang and of the lip-service to Christianity which they were easily rendering in this pleasant, Sunday-morning interlude; a mockery of heroism which should be immortal, spirit calling to spirit, challenging man, wherever and so long as he is genuinely man. Those words ought to *mean*. And if they meant now, as once they had meant, when religion raised its altars in the hearts of men, when to it lives were dedicated, and for it death was courageously dared – if those words really meant, now as then, none could sing them, even think them, without his heart returning answer.

The martyr first whose eagle eye
Could pierce beyond the grave,
Who saw his Master in the sky,
And called on Him to save.

That was Saint Stephen. . . . A *man*, "with hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions . . . subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer" as those of us who were singing. "And they stoned Stephen. . . . And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep. . . ." He was flesh, and blood; a young man, with youth's eagerness and passion for life. And he was murdered by a mob: just for a conviction, bruised and beaten down by stones, angrily wrenched from the earth by human hands. Stephen "followed in His train", to die for a belief.

They met the tyrant's brandished steel,
The lion's gory mane,

They bowed their necks the stroke to feel.
Who follows in their train?

"Tyrant's brandished steel" was a sword in the hands of an executioner; a sword which required two strong hands to lift, flashing with light in the morning sun, at some place of public execution. "The lion's gory mane" should call to mind a hot and dusty Roman arena, its benches thronged from lowest to highest with the pomp of empire; and down there, in the center, defenseless, a huddled group, and a lion – a raging beast, panting, his fur matted with the blood of earlier victims. "They bowed their necks the stroke to feel", because they believed, and through belief were strengthened and made ready to meet all: oppression, and brutality, and murder. *Peril; toil; pain; woe;* and *patient*, and *valiant*: those words, too, were in the hymn; not soft, easy words, but hard, lean, and muscled, despite the placidity with which they were sung this morning, and had been, in many places, over many years. At the end we dared – but *dared* is inappropriate, where meaning and emotion were so remote. At the end, we sang what was meant to be a prayer of believing hearts:

O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train.

A few minutes later we were outside, pleasantly exchanging commonplaces about a fine sermon, or a beautiful service, or about the weather and our game of golf.

But somehow, I couldn't put away the hymn, and the disquieting thoughts it had aroused. They pressed close beside me as I walked home; they hung about the table at dinner, and would not leave throughout the afternoon, in spite of letters insistent upon being written and that new French novel, so moving when I put it down last night, but now strangely flat.

We hear much, today, about the trouble with religion, and about the ineffectiveness of the Church. With regret, or exultation, as the case may be, men continually reiterate that Christianity is an out-moded garment, and that with horse-and-buggy days behind us, we must gear our thinking to twelve cylinder motor-cars, and to the aeroplane; life, they tell us, has become practical, experimental, rational, and materialistic, without place for ideals. And there are endless other accountings for religion's contemporary failure to take hold upon the hearts and minds of men, and suggestions without number from the remodellers and substitutors, who are loking for a return to life in place of a long-overdue burial of the dead. There is the social gospel, emphasizing a second commandment about neighbors, too often to the exclusion of a first commandment about God. There is the gospel – new enough, in all conscience – of making religion attractive and interesting, giving people what they want, with little if anything said about what they ought to have. It is a shameless kind of democratic dogma, insinuated into creed, and toying with popular devices: the drama, moving-pictures, the relation of worship and the dance; forums, book-reviews, social hours, and legionary efforts, in religion's slandered name; novelties to titillate a novelty-mad generation. There are cults of this, and cults of that; variously designed to appeal either to surface emotion, or to what, with such slogans as *thought-provoking*, on more self-conscious levels of society loosely passes for intelligence. But all have somehow fallen short of the goal they set themselves. They have failed to fill up emptying pews, often, now, dusted off for but the single service of Sunday morning. Religion has gone on declining.

Uncomfortably, but pertinently, at this point, I remembered two remarks of a young liberal colleague, earnestly, I believe, struggling to adapt religion to a changing world; like all liberals, without realization of the complete irrelevancy of any such adaptive technique. We had argued warmly through a long lunch-hour. "I should hate," he asserted, pushing back from the table to emphasize what was evidently, for him, the crux of the matter, "I should hate to think we were all miserable sinners". Now I have long deprecated the irrational mingling of thought and emotion in that hate-to-think juxtaposition; and I countered with a provocative, "But suppose, after all, we are?" I might as well not have spoken, for my friend was enthusiastically away on another outpouring of suggestions for the new day, impossible to follow, until I once more reached up through fogs of discourse to grasp the other sentence. There was the familiar prelude, "I should hate to think"; and then, "that society, after two thousand years, hadn't progressed; that it was still bound by the social and ethical ideas of a Jew of the first century." How they all rally around that conjurer's formula of "progress" and its synonyms! I was glad a lecture appointment broke off the lunch at that point, and I came away puzzled and confused, but with those two sentences filed for later meditation; sure only that they were concretely symptomatic of what I had long felt to be a fact, that one of the principal signs of disease in religion is exactly this softening down of belief, from the rigorous objectivity and authority of "which a man must believe, if he would be saved" to the pleasant, convenient individualism of "I should like to believe", readily evolving into an equally convenient and temperamentally fluctuant, "I believe". An ancient story tells the fate of a house built upon sand; and, *per contra*, tradition has it that the founder declared, "Upon this rock will I build my church." Tradition also has it that the human embodiment of that rock went to death, for his belief, bound upon the torture of a cross, with his head downward!

Consideration of the singing of a hymn seemed to have carried me far from a service of worship on a midsummer morning. Yet I somehow felt they would all – these ideas of mine – eventually range themselves in pattern, and that in them I had a clew worthy of persistent following. Besides, there were other thoughts surging up into consciousness.

What about that freshman, last spring, who wrote, in a theme descriptive of the college chapel, "It has a religious atmosphere, because there are hymnbooks and an organ"? So terse a setting-forth of the connotations of religion for a far from stupid young mind meant more than the superficiality for which I had been, at first, inclined to pass it off. Was not that freshman definitely a part of the picture? Didn't he, evidentially, *mean?* And wouldn't he, if he happened to discover himself in church, sing "The Son of God Goes Forth to War" with placidity and indifference – largely, out of a sense of good form and team spirit? At about the same time another student had admitted, "No, I don't go to church – except at Christmas, or

Easter. Why should I? You go to church only when you are in trouble, when you want something, or when you need help. I don't need anything." And still a third, trying to account for the little meaning religion had for him, incidentally revealed that he had absolutely no reason for kneeling when he entered the church. "Why no," he said, as if surprised that such a question should be asked, "I don't know why I kneel, except that everyone else does. When I've been down as long as I think I should, I just get up." Again good form and good team spirit. But important though these may be for the unimpeded movement of a social order, they do little to breathe vitality into the things of heart and spirit, into religion.

Those boys, and their words, are not to be dismissed as if they were isolated cases. On the contrary, as anyone who has come really to know college students will testify, they are representative of a condition. Nor are they to be passed over with words like *adolescence*, and *indifference*, and *ignorance*. After all, adolescence does grow into manhood; manhood's ideas grow out of those of adolescence. And indifference simply will not do. More than once I have heard boys say, with a depth of seriousness to which they rarely attain, "What we need is something to be loyal to. Something so much bigger than we are, to which we can give all we have, in which we can completely believe. Only, there doesn't seem to be anything worth it." Then, misguided by false prophets, masters of the glamorous word, they offer their loyalty to false gospels, seizing, with youth's uncritical enthusiasm, upon the new declarations from a new Sinai, and offering unrestrainedly their hearts and minds and energies to

Marx Clubs, and Liberal Societies, and strikes against war, and similar follies of a disrupted society. But they are ready for more substantial revelations. Now and then one seems to catch, across the cobblestones of modern thought, rumblings, as of the tumbrils of a new revolution, quite unlike that looked for by our advocates of a proletarian dictatorship. For whatever evidential quality they may have, I quote sentences which appeared, not long ago, in the paper of a junior, in one of our eastern colleges, who had found a three months' exposure to Milton disruptive of a too lately assumed "modernity". He wrote:

> I started reading Milton with my feet on the table—just to prove my mettle—and finished with my feet on the floor, and a mass of sensations battering the walls of my head. . . . And I knew that if those few solid bits of thinking should gather more ideas to themselves, I should soon find myself going back into the sort of sound and comfortable mind that I brought with me, to be baptized with the flood of modern thinking, and the lovely personal influence of the great men who teach, or give opinions on the more fundamental ideas of our lives, in college. . . . As the days sailed on, those few ideas (or perhaps they were only attitudes) became more fixed, and began to gather together and to form a rise of solid ground in the midst of a swamp. And standing in the very centre of this rise, I could feel myself losing, for whole minutes at a time, the odor of the surrounding scum and uncertain mud. I even ventured to take a step or two, and found my feet able to get firm grip. The sound of my feet trying to raise themselves up out of the mud was gone, and for a few minutes, ever since, I have seen the clouds and mist nearly on the point of dissolving.

I am quite amazed even yet that I like the smell of fresh air better than the more exciting odor of the rotting muck, but I still have a considerable mixture of each, so that I enjoy both the old-fashioned air, and the modern stench. I know I should really be a terrific disappointment to some people, were they to learn it, but I honestly think that Milton's *Paradise Lost* is something rather more than a curious relic, left by a comically ignorant moralist. Of course, Mr. Milton is somewhat inferior, in that he had not at hand the fixed and definite knowledge of our modern thinkers. He never, for instance, knew of Einstein's theory of the universe, and I guess he hadn't heard of William R. Hearst, or even of the exquisite Walter Lippmann, two admirable gentlemen, who never, or at least very rarely, talk about anything very much, but nevertheless influence our modern minds.

And God – you were awfully wrong about him, Mr. Milton. He's really merely a device created to keep men from their just deserts. That business of original sin, and even of sin at all, was terribly funny, nice to read, but quaint, with no place at all in modern thinking. Everything goes, at least until it happens to our own sisters, and then we sort of wonder. . . . I was right in line, Mr. Milton; and then you came along, and with one grand experience set me right out of the way. I'm getting more uneducated, as I come back to read parts of your mind again, and I'm well on my way back to my High School mind that was such a comfort, and was really not a modern one at all. In short, Mr. Milton, you've started the degeneration of my modernity. If things do come to a finish, with solid ground under my feet, I'll be a failure, because the uncertainty of the other really leads to greater minds, in greater men. . . .

John Milton has been the greatest experience for me since I ran across *Treasure Island*, quite a few years ago, when it was raining and I was in the attic, going through some old, old boxes of books my folks used to read before they found some nicer covers and a polished bookcase. They look funny, together, don't they? *Paradise Lost* and *Treasure Island*! But if you knew what *Treasure Island* did to me back then, when I was young, you'd better be able to judge what *Paradise Lost*, with all the splendor of its music, and the two-fistedness of its theology, what *Paradise Lost* has done to me now.

John Milton, my feet are on the floor, now. Somehow I feel my knees ought to be.

Obvious though the irony of these sentences may be, and superficial some of the commentary, the sound of revolt is clear, the denial of indifference evident.

And as for *ignorance*, as an explanation of the college man's attitude towards religion, ignorance means only that someone, at this stage, has failed to teach. It may be the home; it may be the school; it may even be the Church, and her commissioned representatives. But someone, somewhere, has failed to give power and meaning to things which are of first importance. Someone – or several somebodies – has failed to breathe upon the bones with the spirit which imparts life, so that too many, young and middle-aged alike, are now walking, dejectedly, without purpose, through the valley where there is no water, where the bones are dry.

Teaching which is effective has its springs in conviction; and conviction means anything but indifference to the meaning of words: to "lion's gory mane", to "tyrant's brandished steel", to prayer for grace that we too "may follow in His train". And wherever responsibility for failure be laid, whether at the door of teacher, parent, or priest, these are all alike of the generation which troubled me this morning with their singing.

So perhaps, when all is said, teaching is the gist of this as of so many other matters, and just here we touch the solution toward which we have deviously been following the clue of the singing. Perhaps words are lifeless because teaching, from home, or school, or church, has denied them life, to be found only when imagination quickens sign and symbol. Where there is no vision, entire peoples may perish, and with them, truths too long untouched by imagination's living fire, revealing and transmitting the life that is, implicitly, in words. Truth decays from being taken for granted, from being looked upon as a matter of course. It is like sunsets, which lose their throat-constricting beauty and become the end of one more day; or like cold water, abundant all about us, drunk so thoughtlessly that it ceases to be the ever-renewed miracle it is, because we have never known what it meant to be without it. Yet there is an important difference. The refreshing power of water is unaffected by attitude. But if truth be received and taught as a matter of course, it soon becomes itself devitalized, ineffectual for work upon the minds and hearts of men. Thus are those who are taught denied a heritage of life; and behind them, those who teach have also denied, or died to what is living truth.

Here it may be well to point out that it is not truth which changes, or is to adapted to the novelty of a changing time. Truth remains, the rock upon which beat the winds and waves of shifting conditions. Not truth, but men's attitudes toward truth; not truth, but their teaching of truth undergoes change and enfeebling modification in the name of progress.

So Christianity has suffered at the hands of those who have, through familiarity, come to take it for granted. It has suffered because they have tried to teach what was, for them, already enfeebled and devitalized; and their teaching has been a despairing effort at adaptation; a mouthing of words, until God, for example, has become "a life urge", "a principle of law", or "order", even of "concretion": anything but the Father of men, the Creator of all things visible and invisible, before whom every knee shall bow, "of things in Heaven and of things in earth". They have softened and democratized dogma, until dogma has evaporated into meaningless, if pious, mist. They have urged a vapid individualism, leaving the individual with next to nothing to which he could hold with conviction; and at the same time they have fostered in him a demagogic pride in his potential ability to think all things through for himself, to probe the arcana of philosophy and theology, though his mind be but sadly furnished, philosophically or theologically. (*Non licet omnibus adire. . .* ! From a vacuum, little more than vacuity is likely to result!) Yet they have, somehow, given the average man one sure conviction: that come what may, he has a right to his opinion, with never a thought as to the responsibility entailed before one has a right so much as to venture to have an opinion, to say nothing of rising to its defence. And they have brought low the ancient pride of theology, to make her little more than a kitchen slavey of science, economics, sociology, psychology, and other princes of a new enlightenment and an intellectual new deal.

Small wonder that religion grows "pale and specter-thin" as a result.

If such analysis be to any degree accurate, our contemporary problem of religion and the Church, despite many things about which many people have grown extensively vocal, does seem finally to come back to instruction, and to decrepitude of conviction lying behind instruction. Conviction must be renewed, that instruction may be revitalized. This is the clear answer to the dissatisfaction with the singing of a hymn.

Not that Christianity should change. If it is true, it must remain fixed, the same today as yesterday and for so many yesterdays before. If it is not true, no amount of tinkering and patching will save it from the rubbish-pile of once-cherished but ultimately invalid ideas. Nor that the Church should adapt her teaching to the demands of a changing age. In that direction lies only still more wretched failure, and the perfection of what has already gone too far: the translation of dogma into vulgar, wishful, subjective substitutes for thinking, and of worship into innocuous and inexpensive entertainment for *audience* or *spectators*. (Its advocates may choose between those last two terms, so long as they refrain from putting their hands to the more solemn *congregation*!)

And yet, certainly, change must come in the teachings of the Church. But not in the direction sponsored by reformers and liberals. Too long she has halted between many opinions, pitifully concerned to try to square doctrine with this or the other popular hypothesis, until she has come to speak uncertaintly, hesitantly, as if waiting for tomorrow's newest thesis, to which she must again adapt her words. She needs conviction.

And her ministers need conviction, to speak with authority to those whom it is the Church's business to teach. Let her speak with that conviction and authority, and her voice will again take hold on ready hearts. Let her give the emphasis of reiteration to the profound meaning and life of the words she uses, of the symbols and services which are a shining heritage, of the truth unto salvation, which is hers from her unique Master; words, symbols, services, and truth will take on meaning and life to a generation which has asked for bread and received only a stone. But there must be the preface of change, or renewal of teaching, to consist, essentially, not in going forward, but in turning back; in return to ancient, elemental things which are a power and a glory: rejected stones of recent builders, which yet must become the head of the corner, if the building is to stand foursquare to whatever winds may blow.

Such renewal is contingent upon three "first things": a recognition of the fact that religion is primarily concerned with transcendent, supernatural truth; fresh, and continued emphasis upon the *obligations* laid by religion upon its adherents; and rediscovery of authority, of power to speak with the attention-compelling voice.

First of all – nothing can precede this – the Church must bear in mind that she is concerned with truths transcendent of the temporal and the material. She should not be ashamed of the word *supernatural*; and she should remember that what is *supra-rational* is not, of necessity, the same as what is *irrational*. B. H. Streeter has nicely made the distinction when, speaking of man's apprehension of God, he writes: "Such an apprehension is supra-rational; that is, it springs, not from unreason, but from an intuition which soars beyond and above anything that the intellect by any purely analytic operation can discern. It . . . comes in a mode akin rather to the artist's vision than to the scientist's demonstration."* The great task of the Church is consistently, insistently to proclaim those mighty words, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world". "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly."

The Master who spoke those words is her glory, and her right to the attention of despairing men. He, and He only, should be the center of her teaching, for His Cross, and His broken, nail-pierced Body, stretched upon that Cross, are the seal of her life; His story the way, and the only way by which she may win men's hearts. That simple, deathless story she must tell, over and over again. Shame upon her, when in academic restraint she talks of myths, and still pretends to the name of *Christian.* Her God is no vague, ineffable and intangible essence, vaporously endowed with extra-spatial, extratemporal qualities of eternity. He is a father of His children, Who has loved them from the beginning, and will love them unto the end. In that yearning love, He would show them what He was, in a way they could all understand; He would reveal to them what He really was like. And once, in the long procession of the ages – great miracle beyond mind's comprehension, which yet the heart can know and believe – once, He took upon Himself the humility of human flesh, and of mortality; He came, a man among

* B. H. Streeter, *The God Who Speaks.* Macmillan, 1936. p. 31.

men. Once, the very God incarnate walked this earth, among Judea's obscure hills, and by her shining sea. He ate and drank with men, and taught them. And just because He loved them – for no other reason – He underwent shameless trial as a criminal. He was scourged, and spat upon; He was howled down by a mob. And just for love of others, this God died in agony, at a public execution, His limbs wracked upon a cross, praying that those who tortured Him might, for their ignorance, be forgiven. He died because He loved men; and for love of men, He triumphed over death, in resurrection: to point the way He had Himself travelled, to life beyond life. That is, essentially, the Christian story, and there is none which is greater; none with more latent power over human hearts. It is no idle saying – "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me". It was uttered with authority, and it is the most important sentence in all the world. If the Church would lift Him up, that men may see! If she would, as a start in the direction she must go, recognizing its undeniable, immortal appeal as symbol, only hold high a crucifix, by displaying it prominently upon the walls of her buildings! In it is the faith which overcomes the world.

In the next place, the Church must come again to realize that beliefs which make no demands upon a believer are shabby things, ineffectual to call forth the loyalty necessary to vitality. Convictions involve loyalty; without it, they are less than nothing. And we are most loyal to that which asks most of us. To know that man is capable of participating in the Divine, *only if* "he will dispose heart and mind aright to receive what is freely offered him" (again in the words of Canon Streeter) is a basic attitude. To understand that it *is* a hard thing to be a Christian, that the phrase is not emptiness but includes the difficulty alike of denial and courageous affirmation: to understand just the beginnings of the significance of the sentence is almost necessarily to move in one of two directions. Either we shall dismiss religion with a shrug, deprecatory of the expenditure of so much time, energy, and thought; or we shall pick up its challenge, rejoicing in a summons which is a denial of placidity. With either response, religion is the gainer from the decision; decision whereby is made clear who, positively, is on religion's side.

So, the Church must have done with softness and palliation. She must insist, seasonably and unseasonably, that we mean what we say; and she must teach us, without abatement, what the meanings are: what is involved, for example, when we ask for grace to follow in His train, or when we daily, often unthinkingly, pray, "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us". To avoid misunderstanding, that *as* might, perhaps, be translated into a more modern *for*, thus sharpening emphasis upon the crucial idea that prayer which looks to God cannot be effective if it avoids God's conditions. But there should be no toying with evasions similar to that of a youthful friend of mine, who wanted to insert *mean to* after the *we*: "as we mean to forgive those who trespass against us"! To be sure, he could pray sincerely, as a consequence of the modification; but it was a sincerity without the sinews of obligation, transforming prayer, meant to be effectual because it laid preliminary responsibility upon anyone who would honestly offer its petition, into little if anything more than beautiful, well-ordered words. How many prayers fail of answer because those who pray, consciously or unconsciously, fail thus in some way to abide by the rules! And the cynic mutters, "Futile", or talks with facility of a psychological satisfaction. Insistent upon those rules, upon obligations and demands, the Church, again in the twentieth century, should speak especially to young men, "because they are strong". And she is likely to find that such emphasis will be a renewal of her own strength. For youth is watching for the summons which asks for all he has to give, for the best there is in him of courage and strength and loyalty, of body, and mind, and heart.

Finally, to this new-old emphasis upon transcendent, supernatural truth, revealed in the imperishable story and person of a God Who loved His world, and to insistence upon the demands and obligations of religious allegiance – to these must be added *authority*. It is one of the idiosyncracies of human behavior that we are ready to listen submissively, even awesomely, to the expert, in almost every field except that of religion. Pumpkins, or hogs, at a county fair, may be judged only by those who know and who speak with the voice of knowledge. But religion is an open country, and few there be who do not venture pronouncements. In the modern democracy of belief, submission is evidence of the weaker, unthinking mind. I suspect the Church is in no small way responsible for the heresy. Certainly it is true for many Protestant churches; and we have the resultant anomaly which leaves to the individual the profoundest matters of human experience, to think them out for himself, on the theory that it doesn't so much matter what a man believes, as long as he is sincere.

The curse of that word, *sincerity*, in our modern, Romantic world! Too often it is resident with distortion and vacuity of mind! We have suffered too long under doctrine declaring, "My ideas are as good as my neighbor's", without consideration of the comparative furnishings of my neighbor's mind and mine. All of it is little less than nonsense, and to counteract its disruptive influence the Church must raise the despised head of theology, lifting her again to her one-time proud position as queen of the sciences. She must teach, with power, "the faith once delivered to the saints"; assert the inalienable authority of that which she has received from above: truth essentially supernatural, and, in its ultimates, far beyond the reach of so slight a single power as a man's unaided reason. For religion takes hold upon the complete man, upon the entire mind and heart, not upon a single aspect of that mind. With our present deification of reason religion has little to do, and she is bound to fail lamentably if she holds parley with that variety of idol-making. Her business is to declare the truth with authority to men and women waiting for the voice which knows. To them her word is, "Come and see." "Taste, and see that the Lord is good." Always, in these words, she has offered the world the completely pragmatic test; and, ultimately, the only meaningful kind of working-things-out-for-oneself: a working out on the basis, and on that basis alone, of submission to authority, and a willingness, honestly to try techniques and methods approved by authority, wisdom, and experience.

In authority is power; in any truth worthy of the name is bound to be authority. And not until religion relearns authority, daring, if need be, to thunder from her mountain-tops of prophecy, not until then should she expect to be a power in the modern world.

A voice of authority, declaring truth which is not trimmed, which makes demands, and lays conditions; a voice of authority, speaking with authority of those things which it knows, calling for understanding and imagination, which give life to symbol and word; a voice of authority, reiterating its central story of a loving, suffering God: these are essential to a renewal of religion today. Without compromise, the Church must stand foursquare to all the world, proud of her heritage, scornful of any softening or democratizing of her great dogma. Let her cease trying to adapt, in an effort to go forward. Let her but stand, and see what things God will do for her. Then only shall she find new might and power, a newness which is very old. Then only can she expect to be one with that ancient church, of which it has been written, "The priests could not stand to minister by reason of the clouds, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord." In her renewed light and power there shall be vision for men and women. They will know a little of what it means to follow in His train, and they will no longer be placid and unmoved, because they have come to take life's greatest truths for granted. They shall sing praises with understanding!

Land Tenure

RALPH BORSODI

IN A society in which social well-being and economic prosperity is to be achieved through the application of agrarian and distributist principles, the population must consist mainly of families living in the country, and operating individually their own homesteads. But since the ultimate aim of such a society is to free mankind morally, economically, and politically, a system of land tenure based upon compulsory attachment of the population to the land, as was the case with serfdom under the feudal régime, is excluded. The system of land tenure in such a society must therefore be one which furnishes the opportunity to every family to acquire land and to establish a homestead. The almost universal impulse to establish homes, especially when encouraged by appropriate social and educational leadership, can then be relied upon to reverse the present trend toward a population consisting mainly of tenants, actual and virtual.

The present system of land tenure – which is based upon the legal theory of freehold ownership of land modified by the right of the owners to lease and to mortgage their land and of the taxing powers and of mortgagees to foreclose the land – offers such an opportunity in appearance, but denies it in practice. A century of trial of the present system in this country is the proof of the statement. The present system has not made America a nation of home owners. The present system has made America a nation of land speculators. Since the establishment of the republic, and in spite of the fact that up to the last twenty-five years good land could be secured under the Homestead Law by any family, the proportion of land owners to the total population has steadily declined. The principal institution responsible for this, in my opinion, has been land speculation. The aftermath of every boom in land has been the shifting of ownership, actual and virtual, from individual families to banks, insurance companies, land companies and other absentee land owners.

In 1914 the farming plant of the nation – land, buildings, livestock and equipment – had a value of $48,000,000,000. By 1919, during the boom years following the war, it had risen to $79,000,000,000. Everybody bought land. Farmers apparently became rich (like the general public which speculated in corporate securities), *not* from the income from their farms but from the rise in the value of their land and the additional land which they purchased by mortgaging the land which they originally owned. Today this plant is worth in dollars about $45,000,000,000. The rise of $31,000,000,000 during the boom, operating upon the universal tendency of the American people to get-rich-quick and to get something-for-nothing, led nearly every farmer to mortgage his land in order to speculate in this rise. The subsequent fall of $34,000,000,000 led to wholesale foreclosure not only of the new purchases but of the land originally owned. No wonder there was an agricultural crisis. No wonder irate farmers began to mob the judges and sheriffs who were foreclosing their farms. No wonder the demand for agricultural relief was answered with moratoriums forbidding foreclosures and government farm and land credit agencies.

These reactions to the crisis well illustrate the American public's disinclination to study first principles. The part which the combination of land speculation and the present system of land tenure played in producing the crisis was overlooked. Yet the whole history of American farm and home ownership has been a record of these alternate speculative booms and years of depression followed by foreclosures during the period of liquidation. No agrarian society can be maintained under the conditions which have produced this record. Even if one were to be established by a revolutionary redistribution of land, without any change in the present system of land tenure it would only be a question of time until the conditions of absentee-ownership, farm tenantry, mortgage exploitation, and urban concentration of the population such as exist at present again developed.

The question which must, in my opinion, be answered by those interested in the agrarian, distributists, and homestead movements is what sort of system of land tenure would furnish the population of the nation an opportunity to acquire homesteads and prevent their losing them.

My own answer to this question begins with an acceptance of certain basic ideas upon the land question which were first expressed in their fullness by Henry George in his "Progress and Poverty." Land, George pointed out, ought not to be considered capital. Land differs from all other kinds of property because it is a gift of nature. It is unlike property such as buildings, machinery, agricultural and manufactured commodities which are produced by the labor of men. Its value – as distinguished from the improvements made in or upon it – is due either to its utility as a natural resource – its fertility, its timber, its coal, oil, etc. – or to the demand for it created by its location. Neither of these values, George made clear, was individually created by the owners of land. When not gifts of nature, they were produced by the activities of the entire community.

It is the tragedy of American society that we have used our land, not to establish a nation of independent home owners, but to indulge in gigantic speculations in real estate.

Henry George suggested, as the expedient by which to re-establish economic opportunity, the taxation of land values to a point at which it would be unprofitable to hold land for a rise in value. Land speculators would then be forced to abandon the withholding of land from use; the masses of people could acquire land for use merely by paying the annual taxes upon it. But this ingenious expedient seems to me only one method – perhaps not even the best – which might be used for the purpose of ending the present monopolization of land by the institutions of finance-capitalism. From a tactical standpoint, the single tax as George proposed it seems to me nearly hopeless: nothing at all can be done until somehow or other a whole state is persuaded to vote in so drastic a reform. From another standpoint, the single tax seems to me inadequate. It would work well in cities where land values are high, but it would work badly in the country where land values are low and where it is undesirable to impose heavy cash taxes. Cash taxation always tends to force farmers into commercial and industrial farming instead of permitting them to use their land and their labor first of all to produce food, feed, fuel and other products for consumption on their own homesteads. Finally, the single tax is one of those reforms which would have to be put into effect by the political state and the politicians who operate this institution. If history demonstrates anything conclusively, it demonstrates that governments and politicians are the least efficient and the most tyrannical agencies which can be used for purposes of social reform.

A better expedient might be the gradual substitution of leasehold for freehold ownership – the gradual establishment of a system of land tenure in which the present absolute title to land was acquired by either (1) local communities, or (2) land co-operatives, or (3) land authorities somewhat similar to the public authorities which have been established to operate bridges, tunnels, and other public utilities.

There are two questions with regard to this expedient which will naturally occur to every agrarian and distributist who considers this matter. First, could leaseholds furnish the individual family the freedom and security of tenure essential to such a society? And secondly, which of the various land-holding agencies that might be used would be most apt to discharge the trust imposed upon it justly and intelligently?

Leaseholds, in my opinion, can be devised which automatically renew themselves and which give every advantage of freehold ownership without permitting speculation in the rise in the value of land. Freeholders at best are free only to the point at which government chooses to exercise its underlying sovereignty over the land through the taxing power. The leasehold system frankly recognizes the existence of this underlying sovereignty. The trustees-agency would collect an annual ground rent from the leaseholders in place of an annual tax with no pretense that the owner has absolute ownership. So long as the leaseholders paid their ground rent, the land is theirs and their children's. Any improvements they made on their land would be their property absolutely, to be transferred and sold if they choose, subject only to the ground rent on the leasehold, just as real estate is bought and sold today subject to the taxes imposed by the state. Such a system would preserve the virtues of individual possession and operation of farms, homes, and all forms of realty, but by explicit stipulation exclude speculation. Land would be freely available upon payment of ground rent to those who do not now own property and who wanted to use or live upon it; ownership could not be acquired and tenure would be unprofitable to those who merely wanted to withhold it from use.

Of the trustee-agencies which I have personally considered, the most desirable in my judgment would be the land-cooperative in which the actual leasing and development of the communities was entrusted to an adult educational institution of the type being established at Suffern, N. Y.

The argument against entrusting this task to municipalities and local communities is that it would be relying upon a present political institution to discharge a task which these institutions have shown no indications that they could discharge effectively. The argument against the establishment of land-authorities is much the same — it would make the initiation and extension of the program subject to the political state, even though to a lesser degree. But the establishment of land co-operatives utilizing existing or newly established educational institutions for administering the land, involves no political action whatever. It could begin on the very modest scale with which the Suffern project has started. It could be initiated on a larger scale in community after community if colleges and universities transferred their present investments in industry to investments in local land and deliberately undertook to furnish leadership in land use as well as instruction in vocational and cultural fields.

In every community in which this system of land-ownership was adopted, a new kind of sovereignty would begin to develop in which the units of society were the leaseholders, and the instruments through which the sovereignty was exercised the trustees of the academy which leased the land, fixed and collected the ground rents, and paid the taxes imposed by the political state. With the political state dependent upon such powerful academies for funds instead of numerous small real estate owners, it would not be so easy for politicians to waste public funds or to dispense special privileges and subsidies. If the trustees of the academies were limited to those qualified by education, the politicians would have to deal with a cultured minority whose wishes would be backed by the power of withholding taxes. And since the various academies would have common problems and common aims, conference and agreement between them would enable them to unite to enforce their views not only upon municipal and county politicians but also upon state and national officials.

No doubt other agencies for achieving and maintaining a widespread ownership of homesteads from which speculation was excluded can be devised. This one has the great ultimate advantage of experimenting with the Platonic ideal of a society directed by its teachers and philosophers. It would create a new democratic public — land-holders whose suffrage would produce a new power in the state: the trustees representing those who administered land use. And it would have the immediate advantage of gradual initiation, of avoiding a headlong conflict with the Constitution, of continuing universal suffrage for merely political office, and of enabling people to establish homesteads and acquire property immediately.

Left Wings Over Europe

A New Book by Wyndham Lewis

GEOFFREY STONE

IN HIS latest book* Wyndham Lewis endeavors to resolve the confusion engendered in the mind of the average man by the treatment of international affairs in the popular press. This confusion is caused not so much by the diversity of the opinions expressed as by their uniformity: there seems to be present a certain orthodoxy of thought, and what is confusing is that this orthodoxy maintains small consistency between the particular actions it approves and the ideals it professes. Few are naïve enough to credit politicians and their advocates in the press with entire straightforwardness; but as the welter of events grows more complex the average man must give up the attempt to judge each event, and he asks for some indication of the principles involved, in order that he may see in what manner the various camps are opposed and cast his lot with the one that represents his own ideals. Thus to instruct the average man is the great function of the press in our modern democracies. "The Press," says Mr. Lewis in *Left Wings Over Europe*, "indeed, *is* democracy, as we know it today, one might almost assert." And in support of this he quotes Lord Bryce's remark that "it is the newspaper that has made democracy possible in large countries".

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* LEFT WINGS OVER EUROPE: OR, HOW TO MAKE A WAR ABOUT NOTHING *by Wyndham Lewis* (JONATHAN CAPE, London. 333 pp. 7/6).

If the newspaper has made democracy possible, it is money that has made the great newspaper possible, and money is power and power is the concern of politics. "By whom are we governed at this moment?" Mr. Lewis asks his British fellow-citizens; and he finds that the newspapers give a clew to the answer:

> We are not governed by the King of England, that is indisputable. A Press baron possesses a million times as much power as King Edward, and in his turn the Press baron is to a large extent at the mercy of the people who advertise in his newspapers. When his policies offend them, they threaten to withdraw their advertisements, and he is unable to ignore that threat. But by whom are they – the advertisers – governed? That depends who they are. Those of them who possess real power only possess it *collectively*. Big Business is so closely organized that we can almost discount, from the point of view of *power* (in the politico-financial sense), such individualist "sports" as Lord Nuffield or Henry Ford. Finance has the whiphand of industry; and for all practical purposes "loan-capital", as it has been called (to distinguish it from "capital", in the sense of the few hundred which I hope you have tucked away somewhere against a rainy day) – "loan-capital" is the lord of the earth.

To anyone acquainted with leftist opinion this will not come as a wholly surprising statement: the Communists have insisted often enough that we do not read the truth because the truth would not contribute to the well-being of capitalism. But the surprising thing is that the difference between the leftist and the capitalist press very nearly disappears in the field of international affairs; the leftist declares the capitalist a meretricious liar, but when Germany, Italy, and the League of Nations (the focal points of international concern when Mr. Lewis was writing his book last winter and spring) come to view, there is a unanimity which means that either the capitalist has given up falsehood or the leftist his self-attested truth. Writing elsewhere Mr. Lewis has remarked that letters and journalism today are dominated by a "left-wing orthodoxy". While this is probably most evident in those fields of writing with intellectual pretensions, it is wise to remember that from the more restricted field seep down the ideas which take cruder form in journals of great popular circulation.

About this great great left-wing majority there still hangs an air of the revolutionary minority – which is all to its advantage, conferring, as it does, an appearance of exclusiveness and embattled idealism. As long ago as 1926 Mr. Lewis observed, in *The Art of Being Ruled*, that revolution was the order of the day, it was expected of us all; to possess a dress suit and revolutionary ideas, he said, were the prerequisites of being a gentleman. I have in an earlier article* tried to show how Mr. Lewis relates the current of present-day ideas to our "bread and butter politics", and how he has warned us that a profound change is everywhere going on. Here space does not permit much treatment of the intellectual ramifications of politics, but it must be said that the facts which he presents in *Left Wings Over Europe* tally with the theories he has already offered. If one disagrees with Mr. Lewis's assumptions and general reasoning, then one may well disagree with the interpretations he puts on general events in this book; but, on the other hand, concrete facts speak so powerfully in his latest work that they may win sympathetic attention for his larger ideas.

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* The American Review, October and November, 1933.

It is in opposition to the left-wing orthodoxy mentioned above that Mr. Lewis has written this book, though he has written toward an end which that orthodoxy never tires of declaring its most cherished ideal: peace. He says "in this book I am writing *against war*. Nothing else." His point of opposition is that he believes the efforts being made most ostensibly for peace will not secure it and, indeed, are not intended to. So radical a difference on the question of peace calls for a re-definition of the term itself, and he contends that it is really war which is being offered to the world in the guise of an olive-bearing dove:

> Let us shut our ears to every note of the siren-song about "perpetual Peace". . . .
>
> Peace for the next twenty-five years—*there* is a sensible notion now. But the man who comes along with a plan for Eternal Peace—which he *guarantees* he will secure for you *if only* you will consent to enter upon another world-war—just *one more* war (a really *bad* one this time—far worse than the last): you should have only one answer for that gentleman. Very short and sharp. . . .
>
> Let us then, put Peace entirely out of our minds. . . .
>
> On the other hand, let us concentrate all our attention on *War*. For War is what "Peace" is really all about. Politicians only talk about peace-in-the-abstract when they propose to have war-in-the-concrete.

To understand why "peace" will probably result in war it is necessary to see what the issue at stake in that probable war will be. The peace against which

Mr. Lewis is protesting is that "indivisible peace" which has been advocated by Maxim Litvinoff, the Soviet statesman; it is peace collectively imposed through the League of Nations. Indivisibility has as a correlative internationalism, which means that "we are all in for a great political conflict, which will have its counterpart in every country. And the form that this conflict will everywhere take is, stated in its simplest terms, that of a struggle of internationalists and nationalists — between those who are in favor of centralized power, and those who are not." "The sort of society for which [the internationalists] are heading, whether they know it or not, is a mechanical, standardized society of robots, conveniently mesmerized by slogans. . . . And the sort of society for which another set of men are heading is the opposite — one in which there is diversity and individual initiative." His book, Mr. Lewis asks the reviewer to announce, is "one long plea against the centralization of power"; he is for the sovereign state.

From the standpoint of the leftward-tending press, there is nothing incompatible between the centralization of power and the sovereign state; Germany and Italy are belligerently sovereign, certainly, and they are not remarkable, in the same press, for "diversity and individual initiative". Here again re-definition is necessary, if words and facts are to conform, and Mr. Lewis asks the reader to assume for a while for the viewpoint of the "extremist of the 'right' ". The extremist of the right is avowedly no pacifist and in consequence it has been said that he is anxious for war: fascists are invariably armed to the teeth — cartoonists always draw them gun in hand, as they once drew

Bolshevists bomb in hand. But before assuming the rightist is so anxious for war, it would be wise to see what reasons he has for desiring it. The leftist, it would seem, has many reasons for wishing war; to the leftist's mind "White Civilization is itself a 'disaster' of the first magnitude, and it can be most expeditiously wound up by a universal war. . . . Such an event would secure the necessary *tabula rasa*, upon which a new, and fundamentally different (and, of course, *better*) society could be built." The rightist, on the contrary, expresses opinions which do not easily square with an ardent longing for immediate war:

> He would not, for his part, smash up the white tradition as would the men of the militant "left". He regards that tradition as being on an altogether higher plane than the primitivism of the "brave new world" of the Soviets, whose saurian spinal cord is the *materialist dialectic* of Marx. He would reincarnate the dynamic impulses of individual initiative and adventure, deriving from a higher center than the impersonal automatisms of reptile life, exemplified by that retrograde "dialectic"—impulses which were productive of all the great arts and sciences of the West, but which have been watered down or suppressed, in the quantitative levelment of the mechanical age; and which have been betrayed by the professional politicians of the western parliamentary democracies.
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> These politicians, as he sees the matter, stand for the great capitalist interests—which interests, instinctively, or deliberately, seek, hand in hand with the Soviets, to *trustify* all human society.

Once this reasonable contention is allowed, the picture of the rightist as the arch-centralizer needs reconsideration, and if we turn to his own statements, the "implacable enemy of personal freedom" announces himself, on the contrary, as the champion of the small man in his struggle against Big Business, and its intolerable and "soul-destroying" oppressions: the champion of the creative worker – the damn-fool who *does the work*, whatever that work may be – gripped in the tentacles of "loan-capital". (For he discriminates between "Loan-capital", or the super-usury of International Finance, and the relatively small, concrete capital of agriculture and industry – freed from the *Zinsknechtshaft* which lives parasitically upon it.)

By Freedom, he declares, we latter-day democrats of England, America, and France understand *freedom for the bird of prey*, of irresponsible Finance, to throttle and bleed to death its victims. And for that sort of freedom, he agrees, he has not much use.

Mr. Lewis is worth quoting at this length because he gives expression, in his amazingly flexible and informal style, to a point of view which is too rarely advanced in England and America. In fact, a leading exponent of the Nazi as a sort of groping Distributist has been Mr. Lewis himself, who, in 1930, gave a thoughtful account of German National Socialism in his book *Hitler*. At that time Hitler had not yet been chosen by the German people as their ruler and the Nazi movement was still to enjoy the outbursts of vituperative denunciation, variously Marxian, Liberal, and Jewish, which have been hurled at it since its assumption of power. Though Mr. Lewis came forward as the exponent rather than the advocate of the Nazi party, he saw in the movement a resurgence of national vigor and an affirmation of our traditional Western way of life against the corruptions of capitalism and Marxism. He saw in it (and no one who has read his other books can deny Mr. Lewis an eye acute to discern levelling influences) a great popular movement to re-establish individual dignity and to escape the slave-status which collectivism everywhere imposes – whether by machine-guns in Russia or uplift unctuousness in America. He further pointed out that what, to the Anglo-Saxon reader, might seem the nonsense of "Aryan" pride was at least an expedient way of meeting the disintegration brought about by class strife. Pride in race, as he indicated in a still earlier book, *Paleface*, was far from reprehensible, since it offered one method of lifting the inferiority complex that was being saddled upon the Western white with the purpose of degrading him to the coolie's level, to the accompaniment of much talk about the equality of races and even the superiority of the darker ones. Fascism – as it exists in Germany, Italy, and Portugal, and as it may exist to-morrow in Belgium under Degrelle's Rexists and in France under the leadership of Doriot or La Rocque – is not the last embattled stand of capitalism, but, however objectionable some of its features, a truly popular attempt to preserve the ideals of Christian society and to assert, through the classic conception of him, the worth of the individual; and upon recognition of this depends the solution of the problems of our democracies, threatened, as they are, by the imminence of the Servile State, whether Marxian or neo-Benthamite. Throughout *Left Wings Over Europe* Mr. Lewis stresses the need of recognizing the true character of fascism and insists that the attempt being made to prevent such recognition can result only in war and slavery.

The question arises: Why is this attempt being made? Mr. Lewis does not undertake to answer it, but he does show that the question refers to something very real, the course of which may be traced by those who have eyes to see with. The international policy of Great Britain ever since the rise of National Socialism in Germany, and on through the affair of Abyssinia, has been, as the Italians put it, "replete with mystery". Whatever eventual purpose the National Government envisages its policy as moving toward, at the present time it shows itself decidedly inclined to join forces with Communist Russia and semi-Communist France. Just how it is possible for Great Britain, the bulwark of the capitalist world, to throw in her lot with anti-capitalist countries Mr. Lewis endeavors to explain. His explanation turns on the nature of the "plain, blunt, democratic statesman". The democratic statesman, he says, must feel "like one of those aged London taxi-drivers whose lot it is to ply for hire a cab which is so dilapidated that even the meanest horse-vehicle outstrips it". But, Mr. Lewis continues, he carries a dash or two of Red in his political make-up to show he is "not *entirely* on the wrong side of the fence". The democratic statesman is happily free of responsibility; though he is nominally responsible to the people for his actions, they are responsible, so the fiction goes, for the place he holds, and when things go wrong, they are told to blame themselves, not him. The task of the democratic statesman is, after all, the preservation of the industrial-capitalist system of which democracy is the political "front" everywhere in the world of today, and that system has steadily encroached on personal freedom while telling its wage-slaves how fortunate they are in the possession of civil rights. "It is, in fact," declares Mr. Lewis, "quite surprising how *totalitarian* you can be without anybody so much as guessing that they are a whit less free than they were before!" People are especially not apt to recognize their servitude if they are constantly having dinned into them how terrible their lot would be under a fascist dictatorship.

The emphasis must be placed on *fascist*. Mr. Lewis remarks that this denunciation of dictatorship is "not against *all* dictatorship; only against 'fascist' dictatorship". The hostility to fascism has not remained purely verbal; it has been backed up with practical action. There exists what is virtually an Anglo-Franco-Soviet military alliance, made with a very plain reference to Germany. "This, in its simplest political terms, is a military alliance of democracy and of communism against 'fascism': or of internationalism against nationalism." There would seem to be no other way in which to explain the steady hostility displayed toward Germany by both France and England (the hostility of Soviet Russia is, of course, another matter). "It is because the government of Germany is 'authoritarian' that the fact of an armed Germany is of such overwhelming importance. — No nation can be allowed to have arms, it would appear, unless it is a democracy — or, of course, a soviet."

To say, as does the press in democratic countries, that German armaments are objected to because Germany is a probable aggressor is to obscure the issue, especially in face of the constant overtures of peace made by Germany toward England and France. To what extent, asks Mr. Lewis, can the rearmament of Germany be taken as a *casus belli*?

From the start the post-war "peace" of Europe has been built upon the belief that an enormous nation in the center of the continent would continue to allow itself to be economically bled to death, and to remain totally *without arms* in an armed world: this defenselessness clearly imposed on it to enable the other nations to go on dictating to it in *complete* and beatific security. (This is all that "security" means, about which we hear so much. Or if not, what *does* it mean?)

When the German people decided upon a radical change of government and asserted their national selfhood, they were met with a world-wide storm of denunciation. "That, in the face of this storm, the Germans could not continue to remain unarmed is obvious. It is equally obvious that this movement to rearm was a desperate gesture of self-defense, in the face of daily threats, backed up by an invincible armed might, and all the wealth of the banks of the European world."

Of what eventual good for Britain, Mr. Lewis wants to know, can be the hostility she shows toward Germany? Neither by word nor action has Germany showed herself as having designs on British rights or possessions. This hatred of National Socialist Germany becomes all the more curious when another type of Germany is contemplated. "What after Hitler?" is a question that Mr. Lewis asks us to ponder. The Rhine has been declared the frontier of England by Mr. Baldwin in a famous speech, but suppose people other than the Nazis were behind the Rhine – what then?

If you destroy (at enormous cost in life and treasure) "fascism" in Europe, what then? Shall we all live happily ever after? And along with that question it must be your

> duty to ask: "If you are prepared to take such terrible risk to destroy 'fascism', why have you worried so little about Russian Communism? . . .
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> If you are a pure internationalist and wholehearted "left"-winger (emotionally susceptible to the uplift called "the great Russian experiment") then the prospect of your frontier *still* being the Rhine . . . but finding yourself face to face, on the other side of it, with an absolutist power stretching from the Rhine to the furthest extremity of Asia, will be most agreeable. Otherwise not. For the most the "swaggering Prussian" could do would be to defeat you in war, in his old-fashioned *berserk* fashion. Whereas the Russian Communist would be far more thorough, and incorporate you, lock, stock, and barrel, into a salvationist imperium. . . . That would be *his* worst. And beside it Hitler's worst pales in comparison.
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> . . . What [the public] must ask itself is this: *What would Europe look like a few months after the political destruction of Germany?* If we *must* have a war, let us at least think ahead: let us attempt to visualize what would happen *afterwards.*

In other words, what would happen after one of the most devoutly wished consummations of Soviet policy had been achieved?

If Europe, with Britain playing a dominant part is unofficially mobilized against Germany (Mr. Lewis points out that no action was taken against the occupation of the Rhineland because little else than declaring open war can be added to what had already been done to hamper Germany), "the world has been mobilized by England against Italy" officially – through the League of Nations, "which institution has become what is in fact a Holy Alliance against 'fascism' ". The Italian invasion of Abyssinia was in itself nothing very unusual; it was merely an imperialist gesture on the part of the "proletarian" amongst nations. It was, Mr. Lewis points out, an "exhibition of engineering skill" and not "war in the European sense". Yet great moral clamor went up and all Europe was called to save civilization (as embodied in the empire of the Negus) from the depredations of the black-shirted horde. Italian imperialism was condemned by imperialist Britain and Russia* with imperialist France as a wavering third, but it was not the bloodshed involved that the League disliked (the League is not greatly disturbed that England bombs her former Arabian allies in Palestine to make that country safe for Jews of all lands): it was rather a "clash of rival theories of government", "the first shots in the armed insurrection against the unjust Peace of Versailles". The reaction to this Italian "act of national self-assertion" was amazing and ominous:

> For the first time the entire "left" wing of the world — not merely the "common front" within any particular country — the "common front" of internationalism in all the countries, storming week after week: all the Bench of Bishops roaring together: Mr. Lansbury calling upon all the hierarchies to repair to Jerusalem and proclaim the reign of Christ on earth: fifty-four countries agreeing with one voice to buy no more lemons from the wicked fascist "lawbreaker": the "Stresa Front" shattered overnight. Mr. Litvinoff in the role of law-abiding citizen-of-the-world, in whose mouth unsanctioned butter would not melt, performing a frantic carmagnole in the center of the stage: Mr. Baldwin squatting down and smoking

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* Russia is, of course, an imperialist power — ruling over peoples of diverse tongues and bloods and espousing a policy of international expansion.

the pipe of peace with the gunman who bumped off the Tsar and all his family circle: while "Onward Christian Soldiers" was being community-sung by all the Free Churches, and the League of Nations Union, with Viscount Cecil as choir-master. . . .

All this hysteria had a pronouncedly moral note, imparted to it by the democratic press and the statements of Anthony Eden. But it is so long since moral questions have been at the center of matters of international policy that the true reason for the uproar (that is, the thing that the uproar was provoked to disguise) must be sought elsewhere. Certainly, honest British commentators have been hard-pressed to find out toward what the National Government was, and is, striving. Mr. Lewis mentions too many of these opinions to be reviewed here, though the one that Britain was seeking to preserve the "life-line" of the Empire, the Mediterranean and Red Sea route to India, needs a moment's consideration. In the first place, he says, "the men of the India Bill do not recommend themselves, exactly, to the attentive mind, for the role of dyed-in-the-wool imperialists". The government which undertook "the coercion of the Chamber of Prices, in favor of Babu politicians" would not be likely to provoke a war with Italy over the route to India – which was officially reported to be in no serious danger from the Italians anyway. Finding that Imperial interests were in little immediate danger, Mr. Lewis concludes, having disposed of other even less tenable explanations of British behavior, that the "British government have been acting against the purely selfish (that is to say purely English) interests involved. They have been sacrificing, in other words, the *national* interest of England to other interests. And those interests, in the final analysis, would seem to be *international.*"

The essential explanation of England's attack on Italy Mr. Lewis believes is to be found in regarding the affair as a "dress rehearsal". From this point of view, "Addis Ababa was the roundabout road to Berlin". It was a "test case . . . for the forcible prevention of war". "The word *forcible* is what you here have to underline; in other words, *the prevention of war by means of war.*" "And Peace is of course a peach worth fighting for — again and again, and yet again." There are, he admits, certain facts which this explanation will not cover, the Anglo-German naval agreement, for instance. But his point is, not that that British policy has definitely striven toward a clear end, but that, blundering and swayed by a number of forces, it is moving toward a species of internationalism inimical to the welfare of the English people, whatever good it may result in for their present financial-industrial masters or their would-be masters of the left. He sees the present British government, as well as the British people, ill at ease under the Imperial burden. The "British statesman is, ostensibly, an 'imperialist', dedicated to the peculiar task devolving upon an executive of an outstanding land-owning (and hence *conservative*) nation"; but he is at the same time committed to a League of Nations policy which, verbally at least, is most disapproving of imperialist pretensions. This anomalous position, a combination of an "inescapable 'imperialist' function, with an international theorizing with which it is not compatible", accounts for the mysterious details of English foreign policy. As had been said, Mr. Lewis is convinced that English statesmen have often gone against the best interests of their country; but foreign nationalists have not been ready to believe this, and hatred of "perfidious Albion" grows daily.

Englishmen, in Mr. Lewis's opinion, are not natural empire-builders, and he finds them temperamentally more akin to the Scandinavians than to any other people. Their empire is something bestowed, or forced, upon them by an "enterprising minority of magnificent leaders". The Englishman "possesses the sturdy parochial mind of the citizen of a small and unimportant state". However little the average Englishman enjoys his present situation, he must still make the best of it; and he would do well to recall that there are other nations to whom the imperial rôle is far from disagreeable. The person properly conditioned by the press of the day will doubtless think of the Germans when these potential imperialists are mentioned; but "the British Empire, as it exists today, would not long survive the final extinction of German power".

Should Hitler be trapped into some rash action and the dogs of war be loosed, from one month to the next all the present groupings of the continental powers would be completely obsolete, following upon his fall. It would be absurd to suppose that these contingencies are left out of account; especially when a couple of not exactly squeamishly scrupulous statesmen are concerting to bring that particular situation about. After their *coup*, there should be far more booty to be picked up than is to be found between the Rhine and the Oder.

That a large part might be taken in these events after the fall of Hitler by a power now feverishly stirring up unrest in China and India seems not at all unlikely.

What we are faced with, if Mr. Lewis's analysis of current affairs is right, is something very curious. The press and the statesmen of those powers which are foremost in the League of Nations have consistently sought to divide the world, in the mind of the public, into two areas of light and darkness. In one of these dwell all those peaceable-minded and "democratic" nations determined to preserve Europe as it is (with perhaps a Communist government replacing an existing one here and there); in the other dwell those bloodthirsty fascists determined to rule themselves as they see fit. As Mr. Lewis sees it, this division does exist, but he is not at all sure that the distribution of light and darkness is as conventionally described; he is even ready to look critically at the noisy apostles of light. He finds nothing agreeable in their "super-state centered upon Geneva . . . floated upon a tide of pseudo-Christian and Communist 'idealism' ".

One's attitude toward that "super-state" depends, as has been remarked, upon whether one is for centralized or decentralized government. Choice in this matter is obscured by the consistent misrepresentation of fascism, which has been pictured as the *ne plus ultra* of centralized tyranny. Yet fascism has proved itself an efficient – indeed, so far the only practical – way of meeting the disorder engendered by decaying capitalism and rising communism – while the former has showed itself, in international affairs, no dire enemy of the latter. Both democratic capitalism and communism have the big-business mind; they believe in making human wants and needs conform to a certain industrial technique. Fascism, on the contrary, has asserted the primacy of man; perhaps it means by man the men of a single nation, but that at least makes it concrete and understandable and does away with a loose abstraction (the "humanity" of all left-wing appeal) which is so vague as to allow almost anything to be done in its name. The choice between these groups of the left and the right, says Mr. Lewis, "is an exact parallel, upon the plane of politics, of the alternative of the old-fashioned *personal* business, as contrasted with the 'soulless', anonymous mammoth syndicate, or corporation, which has succeeded it; and from the malignant influence of which everyone is at present suffering, directly or indirectly".

Mr. Lewis is aware that many of the liberties to be enjoyed under a democracy do not present themselves in a fascist state:

> The fascist state, or the national-socialist state, is not, it is self-evident, calculated to develop the maximum of freedom, to say the least of it. It does not even *think* of freedom. It cannot. It is a state virtually under martial law. It is such a state because the War never ended, and through no fault of its own: because the Peace of Versailles was not intended to be a "peace", in anything but name. . . .
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> But unfree as those countries are, under "fascist" rule, they are infinitely more free than is Russia. . . .
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> So if a choice of two evils must be made, by a man who has any care for freedom . . . he would choose the lesser evil. That is mere common sense – though it may be bad marxism, and may even be immoral, for all I know.

Yet the evil of the better choice must not be exaggerated. The most heralded feature of fascism is that it is guided by a "despot" or "tyrant"; but the " 'despotism' of a class, or a 'Cabinet', can go practically unnoticed". "The Sovereign People can be just as oppressive and tyrannical as a sovereign ruling over the people – indeed the individual may be far less *free* when at the mercy of everybody (of an anonymous bureaucratic machine . . .) than when he is, ultimately, at the mercy of one man." That the modern Englishman (and this begins to be equally true of the modern American) is not greatly disturbed by this state of affairs is a saddening fact; for, as Mr. Belloc has pointed out, the modern wage-slave becomes increasingly possessed of a slave-mentality and, rendered impotent by a materialist philosophy, will take security and physical welfare at any cost to his dignity and true freedom. Mr. Lewis has also indicated, in *The Art of Being Ruled*, how the concept of freedom has become degraded in modern terms, until "freedom" is synonymous with "irresponsibility". He stresses the point again in this book: "The majority of men have to be persuaded into freedom, and its concomitant, responsibility. The words 'freedom' and 'democracy' are mere habits – word-habits – with the British Democracy."

On the other hand, the type of freedom which both National Socialism and Fascism have promised to their adherents – provided they are willing to work for it – is very different. What has been mistakenly described as the state-worship of the fascist countries is in truth a revival of national enthusiasm incident to the idea that men owe duties to the state beyond and above their merely personal interests. Some such conception, to be sure, has also gone with Communism, but the nature of the duties venerated in each case should indicate which system is more acceptable to the traditional mind of Western Christendom. Fascism indeed seems to have fostered the type of freedom Mr. Lewis describes here:

> True freedom (and the idea of "freedom" goes hand in hand with the idea of "democracy") involves the full activity of the free human agent, man or woman: it requires a great deal of discipline and hard work: it entails a very great deal of discomfort and hard knocks. In short, freedom *is not freedom*, anything but, as popularly understood by the average sensual man of a modern democracy.

> "*No* way," insists Mr. Lewis, "should be regarded as too orthodox to obstruct and to prevent this transfer and translation of our hereditary freedom [*i.e.*, responsible freedom], from within the frontiers of a recognized and homogeneous state, over into the keeping of some abstract international arcanum."

In expounding Mr. Lewis's book I have passed over a section he devotes to the part religion has played in this crisis, which, though it contains much that is incidentally good, I feel is essentially misdirected. He seeks to connect those clergymen who have joined in the cry against fascism with a religion of the Old Testament as against a religion of the New. He makes a distinction similar to one very frequent amongst romantic critics, a distinction between the Christianity of Christ and the Christianity of Paul. This romantic Christianity of Christ (Mr. Lewis calls it one of mercy, distinguished from one of justice) has always been chiefly remarkable for its humanitarian and sentimental nature, and, like all partial truths made to do service for the whole, it has been used to justify the opposite of what it means in its correct proportion and place. It is religion such as finds its completest expression as a *reductio ad absurdum* in the writings of John Macmurray and Reinhold Niebuhr. If Mr. Lewis would reflect once more on the great humanitarian fanfare that accompanies the establishment of the tyranny he is engaged in exposing, he would probably see that the bishops whom he allows full orthodoxy are perhaps more deserving of the title of heretic than himself, who so willingly accepts it.

But this is a minor flaw in *Left Wings Over Europe*. Of grammatical flaws, as some critics have taken pride in declaring, there are many; yet they are hardly to be condemned in a book written with the speed necessary if its author was to compete with the daily press. It remains a book distinguished by as lively and witty a controversial style as is being written today, one which, with seeming effortlessness, maintains a conversational rhythm while dealing with a difficult and involved subject. Even more than on his style, Mr. Lewis is to be congratulated on the independence and courage with which he has approached his subject. Before this he has showed himself a brilliant defender of the best qualities and works of the human mind, and a man who has justified his position as an artistic rebel by rebelling against all the cults and obscurantisms that commercialism and the romantic spirit have conspired to raise against good art. In the present book he deals forthrightly with a matter that intimately concerns the welfare of all of us, amongst whom are many who have tended to regard the problems of art as of little moment in so troubled a world. Amidst the obfuscations contrived by earnest wrongheadedness and crafty self-interest, Mr. Lewis has ranged himself on the side of a trend in world politics the mere sympathetic mention of which is enough to bar a man from a suburban drawingroom, and to him must go our admiration and respect, for we stand in need of the sword of such clear thinking as his if peace is to be other than a snare for our enslavement.

REVIEWS

A Non-Materialist Theory of Education*

When a man who is at once an up-to-the-moment student of educational theory, a practical educator, and an experimental psychologist known on three continents, brings out a book on education squarely opposed to the mechanistic theories of all the Deweys and the Thorndikes who have nearly monopolized the field, there is created not only news, but definitely good news. For he can attack his opponents on their own chosen ground of experiment and deduction, bring to his aid the additional weapons of a critical traditionalism, and emerge with conclusions highly encouraging not only to those who think of Teachers College as the source of much modern American evil, but also to anyone of common sense who cares to look the facts of human nature in the face.

Designed specifically for his co-religionists, Fr. Castiello's book cannot fail to give Catholic educators a new realization of the essential strength of their position. And with but little change in emphasis it might serve as an admirable guide for educators of any faith (barring that unhappy frustration of faith which is called determinism) who wish a fresh demonstration of the power and the realism that lie in traditional educational theory. For Fr. Castiello, trained in the German psychological school, doctor of the University of Bonn, author of monographs in German, Spanish, and English, familiar with the literature bearing upon his thesis from all points of view, illustrates throughout his book the fact that the findings of modern psychology serve not to destroy but to substantiate the conclusions of the pre-psychological educators of the Western tradition.

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* A HUMANE PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION *by Jaime Castiello S.J., with an introduction by Louis J. A. Mercier* (SHEED & WARD. 278 pp. $2.50).

To animalism, naturalism, determinism, and the Communism which is their usual concomitant Fr. Castiello gives short shrift. "A billion times a billion shadows will never make a reality," he writes; "and a billion times a billion animal reflexes will never constitute human reflection." Progressive education "does away with 'willing'. . . . Self-control and sacrifice naturally go overboard, and children receive a soft, maudlin sort of training. It is well to remember that in order to conquer life man must start by conquering himself." Again he writes: "Naturalistic pedagogy is almost exclusively concerned with the acquisition of skills. . . . And the better trained a man is, the more dangerous he becomes if bad." As for Communism:

> The Soviets have been trying to develop in their unfortunate victims certain patterns of behavior which are impossible, because they do not take into account the real nature of man. . . . When they try to train men to have no need of family, property, or God, they are doing something far more absurd than the man who tries to teach a dog to cook. . . . If human nature is to be patterned and trained, it must be done according to the laws of human nature.

His own conception of that human nature is clear: man's nature is dual – material and spiritual – and he who neglects either aspect does so at his peril:

> Man is neither a machine nor a beast. He is partly animal but he is also partly spiritual. And with this conception of man, the only one which does not kill human liberty and does not do away with initiative and responsibility, education stands or falls.

The resultant conception of education, while it does not yield to summary in this limited space, flows directly from this point of view. "All education consists ultimately in developing reason in order that it shall triumph over matter, over the animal elements in man's nature, over environment and society. . . . Thought, creative power, and the self-making activity [the conscious development of an integrated personality] are the three characteristic human urges which differentiate man from the beast. Meaning, form, and righteousness are the specific objects of these urges. . . ." Culture is "the habit of reading into facts and of being able to assimilate organically their meaning. . . . Meaning seen, meaning loved, meaning lived, that is the whole of education." The function of the teacher is to inspire, both by his own example and by making clear "the actuality of the past in the present"; not to impose meaning upon the student, but to "place the student in such a mental situation that he will be able to abstract the meaning for himself".

For this there must be no doubt in the teacher's mind as to man's ideal nature: "No house can be built without a plan, and no man can be trained without a clear pattern of man's ideal character." Neither must there be any doubt as to what subject-matter to teach and why, or any yielding to the sentimental attractions of an elective system: "The educator must know the psychological influence of each study course, just as the painter knows the possibilities of each color. . . . To put all subjects on a plane of equality is to be color-blind." The actual course of study proposed can be only outlined: Literature, History, Science, Philosophy, with a strong emphasis, reminiscent of Plato, on the rôle of the art form (fiction, poetry, painting, sculpture) as more certainly effective in arousing a fruitful curiosity during the early years. ("The historical rôle of art has been the fixation and consequent perpetuation of truth and goodness. . . . Since youths cannot understand many things, from sheer lack of maturity, teachers should start off by making them love that which they are to understand later. . . .")

Fr. Castiello's comments on the specific study courses are illuminating. On literature: "Literature, by communicating a fundamental curiosity for the things which it presents, is the necessary introduction to science, philosophy, and religion." On history: "Psychologists who dispense with history, and hope to obtain an adequate knowledge of man by sheer experimental methods, are hopelessly mistaken. . . . History can be literature, science, sociology, a source of inspiration and a laboratory for the study of man, all in one." On science: ". . . The great lesson and the great moral value which is to be learned in science is the habit of perfect, impartial honesty; the ideal of truth and perfect loyalty to the object." On philosophy: "It is here that the contemplative habit and the synthetic attitude of mind can best be acquired. . . . Action alone wears any mind threadbare; routine conquers, and the vitality of the ideal, which is nourished by contemplation, diminishes. . . . When people do not meditate, they do not know where they are going, and they do not care. . . ." There is an eloquent chapter on "The Latin and Greek Classics", made all the more effective by the absence of any fanaticism. "It is not the contention here that a humane education is essentially linked up to a classical training. . . . But the school of humanism excellent above all others is the classical school. . . . It is the principle of continuity which keeps us in the classical tradition. . . . The classics are to Western culture what the Bible has always been to Christianity: its principle of unity and the source of its inspiration."

There is much of Irving Babbitt in this book, both in spirit and in actual quotation, though Fr. Castiello's conception of humanism is perhaps closer to that of Professor Mercier. For Fr. Castiello, humanism

> takes into account the dual nature of man, which is material and spiritual. . . . It will always lay an emphasis on the spiritual element . . . and will naturally develop reason which is the characteristically human coefficient. But it will not neglect imagination and emotion, since it aspires to be in harmony with the totality of man's nature. . . . Humane psychology, making man conscious of all that which is specifically human in him, humanizes him, refines him, and facilitates the triumph of his reason over his animal drives by investing it with the organized power of thought, love, and self-control.

But what is chiefly interesting, and what distinguishes this book from any other of its kind, is the author's willingness to meet the modernist educator on his own ground of experimental psychology, and his impressive familiarity with the views of all the hundreds of thinkers, ancient and modern, who have written on either side of the subject. Such names as Maritain, Karl Adam, St. Thomas, Rudolf Allers, Dawson, are matched by Dewey, Thorndike, Yerkes, Haldane, Learned, Pavlov, Watson; and the pages of the book are alive with illuminating references to the work and thought of writers and thinkers and artists from Beethoven to Picasso and from Aristotle to Eddington. Fr. Castiello is as far as the poles from provinciality; and in Professor Mercier's words, "Those who do not share his point of view might well at least study his material and conclusions as critically and as objectively as he has studied their own." If Fr. Castiello naturally emphasises the Roman Catholic conception of God, he does so not without a keen appreciation of differing conceptions – including Buddhism and Confucianism – which would do credit to Babbitt himself; and which is infinitely preferable to Dr. Dewey's incredibly smug assertion that "Faith in the divine author and authority in which Western civilization confided has been made impossible for the cultivated mind of the Western world." And if he is inclined toward an enthusiasm and a diction a little too flowery for some Anglo-Saxon tastes, he has nevertheless written a book which is of the greatest value both in itself, and as evidence of the new vitality that is welling up powerfully to cast the traditional culture of the West into forms capable of winning dominion over the modern mind.

EDWARD MCKAY

France and the Future of Europe*

THAT very luminous writer, M. Louis Bertrand, addresses himself here to the momentous question which his country today is reluctant to face but must confront eventually, and, in resolving it, give the sign of the future of Europe. The question is of Germany, of the new position of forces in the West which the near-miraculous recovery of the Reich has created, and of what France is going to do about it: "We face a Germany more unified, more powerfully centralized than it has ever been in the past, and become again a military power of the first order. . . . What are we to do? From this development, come about in our despite, what can we obtain which will hurt us least or profit us most?" This small book, entitled with the name of the man who veritably personifies the new Germany, gives an answer to this question; and it is without doubt the answer that France must bring herself to give if Europe is to be spared the disaster which impends upon and terrorizes it today. That threatening disaster is the plunge into communism, averted (temporarily at least) by the sword of Central Europe, but certain to come menacing again should the guns go off on the Rhine.

M. Bertrand presents his argument "uniquement du point de vue français et de l'intérêt français", but it is an argument not the less European for its nationalist character nor for the absence from it of that lifeless and mechanical internationalism of Geneva which the European Left has exploited so disastrously in the last few years. For Bertrand's thesis

* HITLER *by Louis Bertrand* (FAYARD, Paris, 120 pp. 3 fr. 50).

resolves into this: that France must deal with Germany as an equal power, fairly and in good faith, and that she must break off the Soviet alliance, which not only obstructs the way to accord between Western nations but is a real threat to European civilization at its best.

This is of course the road upon which a fair number of French Rightists, captivated by Hitler, would like to see their country set forth, but Louis Bertrand is no French Hitlerite. It is true that he was at Nuremberg in 1935 and was deeply impressed there by a patriotic fervor which France today cannot match; it is true also that he writes of Hitler justly and with a good deal of respect; but he has not been won to the siren call of the Nazis. "Je ne suis pas hitlérien: un français hitlérien me paraîtrait une belle absurdité." Indeed M. Bertrand comes to his conclusion here with much reluctance, not liking it at all, for he has a great distrust of that dreadful German doctrine – common to Goethe, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, never renounced by the mind of the nation, and reigning more ominously than ever today – of the supremacy of the will over the reason. "Malgré tout, il reste évident aussi que l'Allemagne de Hitler, pas plus que celle de Guillaume II, n'a renoncé au culte salutaire de la force: qu'on appelle cela dynamisme, volonté, ou force, c'est toujours la même chose." All this M. Bertrand sees, more clearly by far than writers of the anti-fascist Left see it, and he therefore wants France to be on her guard, strong in arms and resistant to any bulldozing from her eastern neighbor.

Nevertheless reality must be faced, and he calls for an acceptance of the German invitation to accord, recognizing these three important probabilities: first, that German armaments are not inconsistent with a will to peace, in view of the French alliances with the Soviet Republic and the Little Entente; second, that there is no reason for doubting Germany's sincerity in designating Bolshevism as the greatest enemy both of Germany and Europe; and third, that Hitler's famous words against France, written years ago in *Mein Kampf*, should not necessarily be taken at their face value today. At the time these were set down there was indeed some justification for them, but "c'est être de mauvaise foi que de rejeter à Hitler des phrases écrites depuis si longtemps, que lui-même désavoue et qui, d'ailleurs, ne peuvent plus être vraies aujourd'hoi, à moins que, par notre faute, elle le redeviennent". Reason supports all this probability, and it is further supported by historical experience (as M. Bertrand might have pointed out and so strengthened his thesis still more), for the fact is that German expansion action is ever to the east – that each renewal of German national energies has been followed not by an onslaught upon the west but by a resumption of the age-old *Drang nach Osten.*

Leaving all such probabilities to one side, however, what is clear – and most luminously clear to Bertrand – is that France must make up her mind whether she is going to put her confidence in Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia. If she rejects the overtures of the former, seeing there her greatest peril, "let us see", says Bertrand, "what are the consequences". "Pouvons-nous compter au moins sur des alliés pour réparer l'inégalité numérique?" England is not enough for she is not a military power. Italy is cool, has enough to do in looking after herself, and even moves toward the German side. "Après cela, pouvons-nous tabler sérieusement sur la Petite Entente, laquelle est travaillée, cà et là, par d'importantes minorités germanique et dont il est à craindre que les territoires les plus découverts soient envahis avant même la déclaration de guerre?" And Russia? Military authorities are not yet convinced that the Soviet armies are all that is claimed for them. But "mettons les choses au mieux", says Bertrand, "admettons la défaite allemande et la triomphe d'une coalition franco-russo-balcanique. Alors, c'est la bolchévisation complète de l'Europe. Est-ce cela que vous voulez? Je ne puis pas comprendre qu'un civilisé hésite un seul instant devant la résponse."

There is thus but one other course to be taken if the disaster which Bolshevism hopefully awaits is to be staved off, and it is that "we consent to talk with our neighbors", that "we endeavor to establish between them and ourselves, if not relations of mutual confidence, then at least a recognized common interest". Such a course, it need hardly be remarked, the present curious French government is most unlikely to choose, although one can perhaps imagine it taking one German slap after another on the face, escaping war in each new crisis but slipping into that dangerous position of inferiority which patriots such as Bertrand desire so ardently to avoid. Hence the need for a truly national government, that France "may be resolutely France and not a radical-socialist bear-garden for a Masonic-Bolshevist gang. Does enough time remain for recovery? Never has the position been more grave, both for us and for all of Europe."

ROSS J. S. HOFFMAN

Plato, Aristotle, and Joad*

WRITTEN for the intelligent layman, this book is presented as a general survey of the history of the philosophy of the West. The author, well known as a writer on philosophical subjects and at present head of the department of philosophy and psychology of Birkbeck College in the University of London, considers the themes of philosophy as being more important to his objective than the names of the philosophers who propounded them or the periods in which they flourished. The result is that the chronological method is rejected in favor of a logical division of the subject, and the arrangement of the chapters is based upon relevances of thought rather than upon the personalities of the thinkers.

The book begins with a discussion of the epistemological problem and proceeds to a critical examination of the conceptions of substance, change, mechanism, purpose, cause, and the Self. This is followed by a section which treats of the distinction between appearance and reality, and finally there is a long chapter wherein the author gives an outline of some of the answers supplied by the great thinkers to the question of what the world really is. The systems of Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Bergson, and Whitehead are succinctly presented, and the book closes with an account of some of the problems of contemporary thought, notably those set for philosophy by the developments of modern science.

The author's viewpoint is eclectic. With a predilection in favor of what he calls "some form of realism and pluralism", he refuses to be classed either as an idealist or as a materialist. His own definition of his attitude is as follows:

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* GUIDE TO PHILOSOPHY *by C. E. M. Joad* (RANDOM HOUSE. 592 pp. $2.50).

> Mind and matter are, I am inclined to hold, both distinct and irreducible reals, and I should be disposed to extend the bounds of reality to include elements of value such as are envisaged by Plato's theory of Ideas. My general philosophical views have, in fact, been more influenced by Plato than by any other philosopher.

Now, your true Platonist would never harbor the temptation to regard mind and matter as two distinct and irreducible reals. Plato himself held ideas to be the only true reals. His system compelled him to explain matter as that-which-is-not, a sort of non-existent being.

Aristotle, however, purged this Platonic notion of matter from its internal contradictions and developed the idea of matter (*materia prima*) as simply that of which things are made. *Materia prima* in itself is nothing actual, is indeterminate and incapable of separate existence, but is determinable, capable of existing in conjunction with an active principle which Aristotle called the Form and which is the living idea of the thing, its very soul. It is this Form which determines the purely passive *materia prima*, in some such way as the form imposed by the potter's hand determines the clay.

Our author expressly rejects this view. He finds that pure matter, since it is non-existent, is strictly inconceivable. "If there is no such thing as pure Matter, there is nothing which can receive the determination of the first Form." This is a fatally easy way to dispose of the problem, but it is likely to give Joad's intelligent layman a distorted view of the Aristotelian teaching. The Stagirite was not content with an ontological dichotomy: being and not-being. His system was a trichotomy: being, power-to-be, and not-being.

Taken precisely by itself, this member of the ontological family is irreducible either to not-being or to pure being. It is certainly not not-being, for it is a determinable which is capable of being finished and perfected. At the same time, it does not deserve to be called being. Nevertheless it is real, something for which the philosopher must find a place. Aristotle called it *potency* or *potentiality*. In itself, it is inconceivable; because to conceive it at all would be to conceive it as something already determinate. But it can be conceived by means of what philosophers call its appropriate act, that is to say, the particular thing with which it is correlated. Thus, it can be conceived as the simple power to be that particular thing. This is the sense in which Aristotle held pure Matter to be an irreducible real.

But if Professor Joad has not grasped this Aristotelian concept with sufficient sympathy to recognize the kinship of his own thought with it, he has certainly understood it enough to be able to devote more than twenty pages to a brilliant exposition of it as applied to Aristotle's view of the problem of change. The section where this is done is one of the most brilliant parts of the book. The Joad conclusion is that the Aristotelian view entails the assumption that "there is in the universe an element, stable, unchanging, and, therefore, eternal, which is at once the goal and the source of change". If we are unable to accept this assumption we must dispense, he says, with the

Aristotelian doctrine of potentiality and actuality and with the whole theory of the four causes, with which it is inextricably bound up. If we do accept it, we are faced, he thinks, with the dualism between the changeless element in the world and the changing material which it influences. "This dualism most philosophers have felt themselves unable to accept." Obviously, Professor Joad numbers himself among those who reject it.

But a latent Aristotelianism vexes him. A case in point is his discussion of what he conceives to be the Platonist slant in the philosophy of modern science. He argues that the present tendencies of science seem to confirm Plato's theory of two ingredients in the composition of the sensible world, namely, immaterial Forms and a featureless medium in which they are manifested. Referring to the Jeans dictum to the effect that ultimately everything will be describable in terms of mathematical laws, he confesses his inability to accept the suggestion that "the world of brute fact" will ever be analyzed altogether.

> There must, it seems, in the very nature of things, be a resistant intactable something in the universe, which, *from the very fact that it is that to which laws apply*, *is itself other than law.* This element of brute-given is, I should say, ireducible, and its presence sets a definite limit to the advance of science. (The italics are his.)

This pronouncement has certainly an Aristotelian ring, but not for Professor Joad. By interpreting Plato's view as envisaging "the need of a substance or stuff, as a medium in which the Forms can manifest themselves" he flatters himself that he solves what he calls "one of the most difficult problems in modern philosophy". Now, in Plato's system the physical world with which science deals is not an object of knowledge at all, and Plato himself could speak of it only in fables or myths. Aquinas condemns Plato for this vague phraseology and expressly accuses him of saying one thing and meaning another. Professor Joad is not immune from the danger of a similar charge. What he says in the above excerpt is substantially Aristotelian. But obviously he means it to be taken as a logical development of Plato's thought. We get a more accurate view of his eclecticism when we come to his brief criticism of Aquinas. Here he tells us that one cannot help noticing "how the full-blooded Forms of Plato, the inhabitants of a perfect and changeless world, which alone possess the full title to be called real, have been watered down until they have become nothing more than the shaping agencies of the *materia prima*".

This statement seems to involve the author in a contradiction. If the full-blooded Forms of Plato alone are entitled to be called real, what becomes of Professor Joad's inclination to hold that matter is an irreducible real? Either matter is not real at all, which is indeed what Plato held; or it is real, in a sense that does not fit into the Platonist scheme at all. Even if Professor Joad is not stating his own view here but is merely talking from the Platonist standpoint, the contradiction is not explicitly resolved anywhere in the book.

The truth is that our author is unconsciously influenced by the great Aristotelian heritage in Western thought. As Muir pointed out years ago in his *Aristotle*, there is a universality in Aristotle's philosophy which modern thinkers are beginning to appreciate. The germ of every speculative trend is in him, and our modern scientists are reshaping with startling frequency his concepts of energy in physics and of evolution in biology. But neither their achievements nor the great systems reared by Western thinkers could have originated in a world that had not been trained by Aristotle to think in terms of matter and form, of potency and act. Despite this great wealth of Aristotelianism, it is possible to find in a so-called guide to philosophy a long chapter on the epistemological problem without one single reference to Aristotle's theory of knowledge. In presenting Locke, Berkeley, and Hume as the first of our guides to the philosophy of knowing, the author, in the opinion of this reviewer, definitely starts out on the wrong foot.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

Three Important Books*

THREE books have recently been published which readers who find THE AMERICAN REVIEW congenial will want to acquire and read, if they have not already done so. They are, in the order of publication: *Who Owns America?* a symposium edited by Herbert Agar and Allen Tate; *The Restoration of Property*, by Hilaire Belloc; and *On Being Human*, by Paul Elmer More. Much of the material in all three books appeared first in this magazine.

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* WHO OWNS AMERICA? *edited by Herbert Agar and Allen Tate* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. 342 pp. $3.00).

THE RESTORATION OF PROPERTY *by Hilaire Belloc* (SHEED & WARD. 144 pp. $1.50).

ON BEING HUMAN *by Paul Elmer More* (PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS. 202 pp. $2.00).

On Being Human is published as the third of Dr. More's series of New Shelburne Essays. With one exception, all the essays in the new volume appeared in this magazine or in its predecessor *The Bookman*. The essay from *The Bookman*, with which the book begins, is entitled "A Revival of Humanism" and was Dr. More's review of the symposium *Humanism and America* which Norman Foerster edited in 1930. It was by far the most discriminating review which that important and much-discussed book received. The second essay is a companion-piece to the first, being Dr. More's fine tribute to his lifelong friend and companion-in-arms, the late Irving Babbitt. Readers of this review will doubtless remember it from its appearance in these pages, as they will most of the other essays: the study of Marcel Proust, which appeared in the first issue; the study of James Joyce and the closely related discussion of Marcel Raymond's *De Baudelaire au Surréalisme*, called "The Modernism of French Poetry"; the studies of Baron von Hügel and, at the end, of Milton apropos of "Lycidas". Two of the essays are more general in scope, dealing with social questions in their religious implications: "Church and Politics", which appeared in these pages, and "Religion and Social Discontent", the earliest-written piece in the book, having formed an address delivered at Lake Forest College in 1921. *On Being Human* is a worthy addition to the rich shelf of volumes we have had the good fortune to receive from our finest critic.

The substance of Hilaire Belloc's book likewise appeared in THE AMERICAN REVIEW, but the material has been considerably amplified for book publication, and provided with a Preface. The original form of the book was published, under the same title, *The*

Restoration of Property, in the first six issues of the magazine. Mr. Belloc is the foremost spokesman – in the book under consideration, in *The Servile State*, and in *Economics for Helen*, as well as elsewhere throughout his writings – for an analysis of the modern economic crisis which an increasing number of persons believe to contain the only desirable solution thereof: a solution that cuts under the false Capitalist-Communist dilemma and throws into new perspective the basic terms and concepts of economic discourse. Whether or not the reader finds the result brilliantly illuminating and immensely cheering, even inspiring, Mr. Belloc's contribution is one that none concerned with our economic confusion can afford to ignore. *The Restoration of Property* provides an excellent introduction.

Who Owns America? is without doubt the most significant American book produced by the depression. It contains more sanity and penetration, more sense of American realities and American history, more grasp of economic fundamentals, more enlightened moral passion, more insight into what is happening and, consequently, into what will happen than the whole monstrous spate of depression books put together. Anyone weary of hollow defenses of the intolerable mess called capitalism, anyone weary of the braying propagandists for the nauseating mess called communism, anyone weary of the crowd of crack-brained credit cranks and panacea mongers, anyone weary of the hysteria and hypocrisy that pass for attempts to prove the Republican Party or the Democratic Party the better gang – above all anyone who thinks there is any hope or virtue in any of the above-mentioned, should spend a few hours with *Who Owns America?*

A third of the book was published in these pages, and all but four of the twenty-one contributors have written here. The bulk of the book comes from the group of Southern writers – the "Southern Agrarians" and their associates – who have been the mainstay of the *Review's* contributors. Eight of these Southerners also appeared in the 1930 Southern manifesto *I'll Take My Stand*. A group that can form the backbone of two such books may well be deserved to be called the most useful citizens our country possesses. They are: Donald Davidson, Lyle Lanier, Andrew Lytle, Frank Owsley, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, John Donald Wade, Robert Penn Warren. There are six other Southerners included, and five writers from the North and East: Herbert Agar, David Cushman Coyle, Mary and Willis Fisher, and John C. Rawe. Two contributors are English: Hilaire Belloc and Douglas Jerrold.

Needless to say, there is not perfect agreement among the twenty-one contributors, nor will any reader like all the chapters equally. The present writer has a number of more or less serious quarrels he would like to pick, and expects to in these pages. But as a collective manifesto of writers who in their various ways are standing against the most powerful currents of the day and expressing trenchantly and eloquently their faith in an America that might have been and still can be, *Who Owns America?* is a brilliant achievement. The question asked by the book's title may be answered by saying that America's future, at least, belongs to such as these.

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